

THE RITUALISTIC TRADITION OF TANTRA IN KERALA: A STUDY ON ITS CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES AND TRANSMISSION

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled '***THE RITUALISTIC TRADITION OF TANTRA: A STUDY ON ITS CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES AND TRANSMISSION***' is an authentic record of research work carried out by **Ajithan. P.I** in the Department of Sanskrit Sahitya, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, under my guidance and supervision and that this has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

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DECLARATION

I, **Ajithan. P. I**, hereby declare that the work represented in this thesis embodies the result of the original research work done by me in the Department of Sanskrit Sahitya, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. N.K. Sundareswaran** and that this has not been submitted by me to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

Ajithan. P.I

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Preface

The term *tantra* in its specific sense denotes traditions constituting diverging "cults" and their "sub-cults" and texts affiliated with them. Among well known cults and sub-cults Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta are the prominent ones and found to have a pan-Indian appeal. It has been a subject long neglected but post-Independence era has witnessed its phenomenal growth as an academic subject. The early studies of Sir John Woodroffe, Agehananda Bharati, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, Gopinath Kaviraj, Vrajavallabha Dvivedi and Sanjukta Gupta were mainly dealing with general aspects of tantrism. But present studies mostly revolve around specific aspects of tantric cults. To this category of specialized studies we can add the excellent academic studies of N.R Bhatt, K.C. Pandey, Navjivan Rastogi, Helene Brunner, Alexis Sanderson, Mark Dyczkowski, Bettina Baumer, Dominic Goodall, Harunaga Isaacson, Diwakar Acharya, Petor Bisschop, Shaman Hatley, Jurgen Hanneder, Raffaele Torella, and Gavin Flood and so on. Now *tantra* remains one of the much advanced fields of studies in the South Asian religious studies.

The Kerala *tantra* is a regional phenomenon which is, in broader a sense, an off-shoot or synthesis of *Saiddhāntika* and *Pāñcarātra* tantric

ritual cults. It is a tradition deeply rooted within the vedic ritualistic fold and characterized by *smārta-paurāṇika* beliefs and customs. There are many ritualistic tantric traditions, specifically familial traditions, in Kerala and none of them have independent existence outside the temple premises.

The present study entitled "***The Ritualistic Tradition of Tantra in Kerala: A Study on its Characteristic Features and Transmission***"

is a general study on the distinct temple ritual cult of Kerala. The Kerala *tantra* remains one of the subjects less explored even now. The scope of such a general study is that it is essential to have a general idea of the subject before one undertakes specialized study of a text or a particular cultural or historical phenomenon. The previous studies do not deal exclusively with ritual peculiarities of Kerala *tantra*. Therefore an attempt is made in the present study to cover the prominent characteristics of the unique ritual cult of Kerala as extensively as possible.

The data collected from the scores of unpublished and less known manuscripts constitute the major inputs of the present study. Many of these texts are of late medieval period; therefore they do not help us to understand the present scenario. For this end several traditional *tantrin*-s of previous and current generations are interviewed and their testimonies are analyzed from within larger context.

The thesis is divided into three sections and it contains nine chapters altogether. The first section entitled '*The Great Traditions of Tantra*' primarily focuses on surveying all the known scriptural divisions of tantric traditions and looking into general characteristics of tantric rituals. The background knowledge of canonical divisions is necessary to place Kerala *tantra* within a broader context and subject it to a comparative analysis.

The second section entitled Kerala *Tantra*, deals with distinguishing characteristics of Kerala tantric rituals. In five chapters it covers wide range of topics extending from the detailed survey of the major rituals manuals and their characteristics and previous studies on the subject to post-*TS* ritual scenario.

The third section entitled '*Transmission- Formal and Informal Methods*' focuses on how a performance-oriented tradition is transmitted orally in formal and informal educational settings. In two chapters an attempt is made to locate the traditional system of tantric education within the broader historical context of vedic and Sanskrit education of Kerala. And the last chapter discusses how education takes place in formal institutional contexts. The third section is followed by conclusion and

select bibliography. At the end photos of some of the ritual procedures are given as an appendix.

The present study would not have been possible without help of several individuals who not only consist of academic scholars but also practicing priests, friends and people who have made invaluable contributions in several possible ways. First of all, I would like to thank Dr. N.K. Sundareswaran, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Calicut, under whose guidance I have carried out the study. I am highly indebted to him for his continuous support, patience, trust and proper guidance. His suggestions and observations helped me a lot in my endeavor. I am thankful to him for the freedom he has given to me throughout.

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My thanks are due to leading traditional and non-traditional *tantrin*-s of Kerala K.P.C. Narayanan Namboothiri, Pandal Vaidikan Damodaran Nampoothiri, Andaladi Diwakaran Namboothiri, Vezhapparambu Brahmaddattan Namboodiri, Pudayur Padmanabhan Namboodiri, Krishnakanth Nambootiri, Karanam Sreedharan Namboodiri, Cerukkad Sreekanth Namboodiri, (Late) Krishna Pidarar and D. Prakash whom I have interviewed and consulted throughout the endeavor. I am also grateful to T.S. Vijayan and Purushotham Śānti for their hospitality and

providing me the details of non-brahmanical institutions of Kerala. I must thank Azhakam Vishnu Namboodiri and Andaladi Parameswaran Namboothiri for providing me with the photographs of major rituals that I have included in the thesis as an appendix.

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Abbreviations

<i>Anu. Pad</i>	<i>Anuṣṭhānapaddhati</i>
<i>Ah S</i>	<i>Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā</i>
<i>AVS</i>	<i>Acintyaśivasādhakhyā</i>
<i>IFP</i>	<i>Institut of Francaise Pondichery</i>
<i>ĪŚGP</i>	<i>Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati</i>
<i>JS</i>	<i>Jayākhyasaṃhitā</i>
<i>K. Anu</i>	<i>Karuttapārānuṣṭhāna</i>
<i>KP</i>	<i>Kuzikkāṭṭupacca</i>
<i>KS</i>	<i>Kriyāsāra</i>
<i>K. Sa</i>	<i>Kriyasaṅgraha</i>
<i>KSC</i>	<i>Keraḷīyasāhityacaritraṃ</i>
<i>KSSC</i>	<i>Keraḷīyasaṃskṛtasāhityacaritraṃ</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>Muktabodha</i>
<i>Mā. Sad</i>	<i>Māṭṛsadbhāva</i>
<i>NĀ</i>	<i>Nārāyaṇātmaka</i>
<i>P. Anu</i>	<i>Parameśvarānuṣṭhāna</i>
<i>PB</i>	<i>Putayūrbhāṣā</i>
<i>P Kām</i>	<i>Pūrva Kāmikāgama</i>

<i>PM</i>	<i>Prayogamañjarī</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Pāśupata</i>
<i>ŚS</i>	<i>Śeṣasamuccaya</i>
<i>ŚN</i>	<i>Śaivāgamanibandhana</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Somaśambhupaddhati</i>
<i>TS</i>	<i>Tantrasamuccaya</i>
<i>T. Anu</i>	<i>Tozānūranuṣṭhāna</i>
<i>T. Ā</i>	<i>Tantrāloka</i>
<i>TVP</i>	<i>Thanthra Vidya Peedhom</i>
<i>U. Kām</i>	<i>Uttara Kāmikāgama</i>
<i>VS</i>	<i>Viṣṇusaṃhitā</i>

SECTION ONE

THE GREAT TRADITIONS OF *TANTRA*

Chapter One

**CANONS OF MAJOR TANTRIC TRADITIONS AND
THEIR DIVISIONS**

The term *tantra* throughout this study is employed in the sense of either several interrelated but fundamentally varying cults like Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Śākta, Saura, Gāṇapatya, Skānda and even Bauddha or scriptures affiliated with them.¹ The term 'tantrism' is coined by Western Indologists², which generally refers to a distinct tradition either parallel or entirely different from that of orthodox vedic tradition.³ As it has been observed by several scholars, like Andre Padoux, tantrism was not considered to be an independent tradition at earlier times.⁴ The early scholars who raised bell about the existence of a cult of esoteric and exoteric practices tended to project its anti-vedic undercurrents and anti-nomian ritual practices as salient features.⁵ But studies suggest that tantrism as a whole cannot be said to be anti-vedic in its core; and tantric rituals are very much similar to vedic rituals in their structure.

The Term *tantra* Defined

It is necessary to provide a tentative working definition of *tantra* at the outset in order to get oriented to the following subject-centered discourses. Of the modern writers of tantrism, Christopher Wallis's definition of *tantra* appears to be much closer to the reality. Moreover, it is all-inclusive. He defines *tantra* as:

An Indian Interreligious movement driven by a ritual practice presupposing initiation, oral instruction from a guru, and micro-meso-macrocosmic correlations, and utilizing mantras, creative meditations, and sometimes sensual or antinomian means to access and experientially assimilate the divine energy of the (various conceived) Godhead, in order to achieve power, pleasures and liberation.⁶

It is far from certain as to when *tantra* had emerged as a system and characteristic feature of primordial customs and practices. And there are no evidences to prove beyond doubt that there were different cults within *tantra* in the hoary past. The historical background of its development becomes more predictable now as several scholars at global level are seriously working together to unearth hitherto unnoticed manuscripts and bring out critical editions. Still there are hundreds of thousands of manuscripts in Indian, Nepalese and European manuscript libraries remaining in the darkness waiting for their time to see the light of the day.

Importance of the *Guru* and the *Śāstra*

The two relatively common characteristics of all great and little tantric traditions are (i) the Preceptor (*Guru*) is held above even god by the followers and (ii) the importance attached to scriptures (*Śāstra*). The

Guru's role in keeping alive the traditions, identifying and initiating a qualified person into tradition are rightly acknowledged and dealt with due respect in all tantric scriptures alike. As has been rightly pointed Gavin Flood:

While the texts of revelation are important, it is all above the revelation as the living tradition of guru lineage that animates the tradition and through which the grace of Śiva is believed to flow. Here text becomes performance and the texts' teachings embodied in human guru.⁷

To speak about tantric observances means to speak about rituals. Rituals are central to all the religious practices prescribed for the realization of the ultimate truth in any of tantric traditions. It is true that rituals form the basis of vedic religious practices too. The similarity between the religious methods prescribed by both vedic and tantric traditions lies in the underlying structure of rituals that seem to reflect concepts of each other. Wherever there is a discussion on ritual, the texts automatically form part of it. Apart from general use of texts to learn and preserve the traditional secrets they are also often relied on to legitimize customs and practices of a cult. Even though conventionally traditional wisdom imparted through an oral tradition is given top priority in all

tantric traditions alike the necessity of textual knowledge is also not underestimated.

The Canonical Divisions

It is essential to have knowledge of canonical divisions in background before undertaking any study on tantric rituals. Here in the following pages an attempt is made to provide a hawk's view of prominent tantric traditions and the major scriptural divisions. And the following discussion on scriptural divisions is a synthesis of the conventional and modern scholarly understanding.

As mentioned earlier there are different cults in *tantra* and the scriptures belong to them are broadly known as 'tantric scriptures'. There are said to have three prominent cults in *tantra*, viz., Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta and the scriptures belong to these cults are generally known as *Āgama*, *Samhitā* and *Tantra* respectively. It is to be noted that this is not a rule of thumb but a general rule that can be applied to refer to divisions of tantric literature in general. There are instances where these terms seem to have employed interchangeably. For example; the *Niśvāsātattvasamhitā* must be a Vaiṣṇava text according to this rule but in fact, it is the earliest surviving scripture of Śaivasiddhānta. Similarly, the Śaivasiddhānta scripture *Ajītāgama* is also known as *Ajītamahātānta*. The texts of other

relatively less prominent cults like Saura, Gāṇapatya and Skānda are highly indebted to the above ones for being a source to thrive on as independent cults.

The Classifications of *Śaivāgama-s*

The classification of *Śaivāgama-s* follows a hierarchy and the method of classification slightly differs in *Āgama-s*⁸ and *Purāṇa-s*.⁹ All *Āgama-s* see themselves to be affiliated with one of these classifications.

The *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, earliest surviving scripture of *Śaivasiddhānta* considers that all the knowledge came out of the five faces of *Sadāśīva*. It divides the scriptures thus emerged from the faces of Śīva into *laukika*, *vaidika*, *adhyātmika*, *atimārga* and *mantramārga* and the corresponding faces from which they originated are *sadyojāta* (w), *vāmadeva* (n), *aghora* (s), *tatpuruṣa* (e) and *īśāna* (u) respectively.¹⁰

īśāna (Upper)	—————→	<i>Mantramārga</i>
Tatpuruṣa (East)	—————→	<i>Atimārga</i>
Aghora (South)	—————→	<i>Ādhyātmika</i>
Vāmadeva (North)	—————→	<i>Vaidika</i>
Sadyojāta (West)	—————→	<i>Laukika</i>

The *laukika* is of ordinary observances of an uninitiated like farming, medicine, archery, ad judicature, *āyurveda*, *dhanurveda*, *nāṭyaveda* etc. The *vaidika* is strictly adhering to the rules of Vedic religion as explained in Vedic literature in general, particularly the knowledge of obligatory, incidental, desiderative sacrifices.¹¹ The *ādhyātmika* is the contemplation of *Sāṃkhya* dualism of matter and spirit and its realization through *Yoga* system.¹² The *atimārgin*-s are so called because the tradition claims to have transcended all the conventional orthodox beliefs and practices. According to Diwakar Acharya they get the name since they were fond of doing things beyond the ordinary measures for example, excessive munificence (*atidāna*) and excessive asceticism (*atitapa*).¹³

Generally, the *atimārga* refers to three interrelated cults in the Āgamic literature, i.e., *pāśupata* (also known as *pañcārthapāśupata*), *lakulīśa/kāpālīka*¹⁴ and *saumya*. Among these three *atimārgic* traditions the cult of *pāśupata* is earliest of any known tantric cults. It is named after the *paśupati* who in the guise of *lakulīśa* initiated Kauśika, Gārgya, Kuruṣa and Maitreya. These disciples are said to have propagated the cult in India.¹⁵

The fundamental texts that deal with practices of *pāśupata*-s are

i) *Pāśūpatasūtra*, on which *Kauṇḍinya* is known to have written a commentary, known as *Pañcārthabhāṣya* and ii) *Gaṇakārikā*, attributed to an eighth century scholar Haradatta. This text is now available with a commentary by Bhāsarvajña (10th century A.D.) known as *Ratnatīkā*.¹⁶ Other than these texts, there are also references of eight *pramāṇa* texts belonging to the *lākula* and *mausala* sects of *pāśūpata*-s.¹⁷

The system *pañcārtha* is so called because their religious practices are based on five principles (*padārtha*-s) i.e., effect (*kārya*), cause (*kāraṇa*), prescribed rules (*vidhi*), union (*yoga*), and the end of the suffering (*duḥkhānta*).¹⁸ The ultimate aim of all *atimārgic* practices is to end worldly suffering (*duḥkhānta*). According to Diwakar Acharya, the early forms of *pāśūpata* observances were centered on bull's vow which has its roots in Vedic cult of Indra. He notes the early practices of this cult as:

In this earliest form of their practices, *Pāśūpatas* ritually adopted the bull's behavior and regarding themselves as the cattle (*paśu*) of their lord (*pati*), cultivated devotion to *rudra paśupati* ('lord of cattle'). They bathed in ashes, wore the garlands taken off the image of *rudra* after worship, attended to him in various ways, adopted the bull's behavior by bellowing and acting out the bull's other behaviors such as kicking and butting, recited the

rudragāyatrī and *aghoramantra* and meditated on the sacred syllable OM. With all this practice, they acquired supernatural powers in their life time and ultimately the end of suffering.¹⁹

Alexis Sanderson, the historian of Śaivism, shows further based on the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhita*'s account that there are two levels of *atimārga* i.e., that of *pañcārthika*-s and those who observe *kapālavrata* or *lokātītavrata* or *pāśūpatavrata*.²⁰ The *pāśūpata*-s can be easily identified as they hold skull-topped staff in one hand and a cranium made begging bowl on the other.

The *mantramārga*²¹ is again classified into five as *bhūta*, *vāma*, *bhairava*, *gāruḍa* and *siddhānta*. These are also said to have come out of the five faces of *Sadāśiva*. Sanderson distinguishes the differences and discontinuities between *Pāśūpatism* and tantric Śaivism as follows:

The only goal offered by *Pāśūpatism* is liberation through the definitive cessation of suffering (*duḥkhāntaḥ*): tantric Śaivism offers liberation, lesser rewards (*bhuktiḥ*), or both. All *Pāśūpatas* are, at least in theory, permanent ascetics: tantric Śaivas may be permanent ascetics (*naiṣṭhikavratī*), temporary ascetics (*bhautikavratī*) or non-ascetics (*gṛhasthaḥ*). Only regenerate Brahmin men may take up the *Pāśūpata* observances: the benefits

of tantric *dīkṣā* are accessible to men of all four castes and to women. All *Pāśupatas* are required to be actively *Pāśupata*: tantric initiate are of two kinds (i) those in whom *dīkṣā* initiates a lifelong obligation to perform tantric rites (*sabījadīkṣitaḥ* and [*śivadharmi*] *sādhaka*) and (ii) those whose involvement in tantric ritual may be limited to passing through the ceremony of their initiation (*nirbījadīkṣā*) and [*lokadharmi*]*sādhaka*). *Pāśupatism* is personal religious activity: tantric *Śaivism* extends from this into the public domain.²²

The Canons of *Bhūta*, *Gāruḍa* and *Vāma* Divisions

The canons of *Bhūta* and *Gāruḍa* streams are totally lost in oblivion but their name and numbers can be still known through some references found in *Śrīkaṇṭhīyasamhitā*, *Kāmikāgama* etc. The subject matter of both of *Bhūta* and *Gāruḍa* scriptures are principally centered on the magical rites of exorcism and curing of snakebites.²³

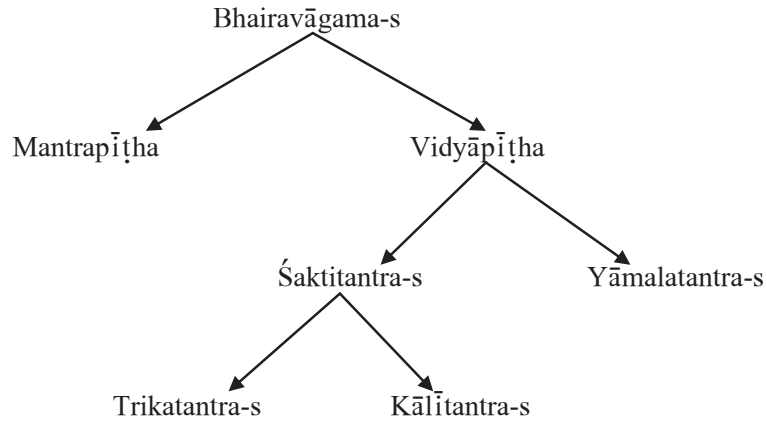
The *tantra*-s of *Vāmasrotas* mainly deal with cult of four sisters *Jayā*, *Vijayā*, *Jayanti* / *Ajitā* and *Aparājitā* who are worshipped along with their brother *Tumburu*.²⁴ The principal texts of the cult are *Vīṇāśikhā* and *Devītantrasadbhāvasāra*.²⁵ The aim of religious practices laid down in these sources is acquisition of power, *siddhi*.²⁶

The *Bhairavāgama*-s also deal with system of classification of Śaiva canons. But it is relatively less complex as they divide the all scriptures of Śaivism into three namely *Śiva*, *Rudra* and *Bhairavāgama*-s. They are 10, 18 and 64 in number respectively.²⁷ Among them the *Śiva* and *Rudrāgama*-s together constitute the well-known *Siddhāntāgama*-s. This implies the possibility that the *Āgama*-s might have come into existence at two different stages. These *Āgama*-s are known for preaching dualism (*bheda*) and dualism-cum-non-dualism (*bhedābheda*) respectively. The *Bhairavatantra*-s are further classified into a number of categories in which, as a general rule the *tantra*-s show the tendency towards incorporating the feminine forms of the ultimate as the supreme principle. The further classification of the *Bhairavāgama*-s also follows a complex pattern. It is as given below.

First it is divided into *Mantrapīṭha* (seat of *mantra*) and *Vidyāpīṭha* (seat of *vidyā*). Then the latter is again divided into *Śaktitantra*-s and *Yāmalatantra*-s. The *Śaktitantra*-s are further divided into *Trikatantra*-s and *Kālītantra*-s. One of the major differences between these *tantra*-s is as it ascends towards *Kālītantra*-s in a hierarchical order the female goddesses eventually rise to dominance whereas, the male gods lose importance and get totally excluded from the pantheon. The below

given diagram illustrates the classification of *Bhairavāgama-s* and their sub divisions.

The Division of *Bhairavāgama-s*



(Figure: I.1)

The structure, content and philosophical standpoint of *Siddhāntāgama-s* and *Bhairavāgama-s* vary considerably from each other. With regard to the content, the *Siddhāntāgama-s* follow a different method of classification whereas, the *Bhairavāgama-s* do not seem to follow a particular method. So in what follows the unique features of *Siddhāntāgama-s* and sub groups of texts affiliated with them are given with special consideration.

The Structure and Content of *Siddhāntāgama-s*

Generally the *Siddhāntāgama-s* are said to follow a system of four-fold classification of their contents. They are *Jñāna* / *Vidyā* (philosophy),

Kriyā (rituals), *Yoga* (practices of breath control) and *Caryā* (daily routines) respectively.²⁸ The *Vidyā* section of *Āgama*-s provides a theoretical explanation of inter-related yet ontologically different categories²⁹ creation of pure and impure universes, thirty-six reality principles,³⁰ theories on salvation etc.³¹

The *Kriyā* section of *Āgama*-s deals with the rituals, particularly performed at temples, ranging from daily observances to detailed description consecration and expiation rituals.

The *Caryā* section of *Āgama*-s is devoted to explain the daily observances of an initiate. His / her post-initiatory observances include daily (*nitya*), incidental (*naimittika*) and optional (*kāmya*) rituals. The *naimittika* rituals constitute the installation of images and consecration rituals. The incidental rituals are performed when certain needs are to be fulfilled.

Apart from being a separate section of *Āgama*-s, *Yoga* is inextricably interwoven in the rituals. The fundamentals of *Yoga* explained in the respective section of *Āgama*-s are slightly different from that of *Pātañjalayoga*. According to Helene Brunner, the *Āgamic Yoga* differs from the *Pātañjalayoga* even in the definition of *Yoga* itself and also in the number of *āsana*-s, constituent *aṅga*-s etc. The *Āgama*-s define

Yoga as a condition of being one with Śiva. Concerning the limbs (*yogāṅga-s*), even though certain *Āgama-s* speak about eight-limbed *Yoga*, a typical *Āgamic Yoga* constitutes only of six limbs. They are *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā*, *tarka* (*vīkṣaṇa*) and *samādhi*. That means the first three *aṅga-s* of *Pātañjala* system viz., *yama*, *niyama* and *āsana* do not find place in the *Āgamic* system of *Yoga*. Another point to be noticed here is that *Mṛgendrāgama* considers *japa* as one of the *aṅga-s* which is placed prior to *Samādhi*.³²

This is the general understanding of division of content of *Āgama-s*. But a closer look into this matter would reveal that this particular order is not seen necessarily followed by all *Āgama-s* alike: for a number of *Āgama-s* available today do not have one or two sections at all. Notably the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*, which is said to be the earliest surviving scripture of Śaivasiddhānta had five sections viz., *niśvāsamukha*, *niśvāsamūla*, *niśvāsottara*, *niśvāsanaya* and *niśvāsaguhya*. Among the available *Āgama-s* only six are found to have followed this division namely *Kiraṇa* (*vidyā*, *kriyā*, *caryā* and *yoga*), *Suprabheda* (*kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga* and *jñāna*) and *Mātaṅgapārameśvara* (*vidyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *caryā*), *Mṛgendra* (*vidyā*, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *caryā*) *Svāyaṃbhava* and *Sarvajñānottara*.³³ Of these the *Kiraṇa* and *Suprabheda* belong to the

Mūlāgama-s and the remaining to the *Upāgama*-s. Rather interestingly, as Helene Brunner observed, the demonstrably early *Āgama*-s not only do not divide their contents into four sections but also contents of four *pāda*-s seem to be interwoven i.e., *yogapāda* contains details of rituals, which usually falls under *kriyā and caryāpāda*-s.³⁴ She further observes that majority of *Āgama*-s have huge *kriyāpāda*-s and except the available versions of *Mṛgendra*, *Pauṣkara*, *Mātaṅga*, *Pārameśvara*, *Suprabheda* and *Kiraṇa*, others do not have *vidyāpāda* at all.³⁵ What Helene Brunner found out that the contents are very much similar but they were not seen systematically arranged into four sections, but logically arranged, in the early *Āgama*-s. Modern historians of Śaivism argue that the four-fold division is basically a South Indian phenomenon.³⁶ Here another significant point made by Alexis Sanderson is noteworthy that many texts which claim to belong to the scheme of twenty-eight *Siddhantāgama*-s are found only in south Indian manuscripts and some such as *Kāmika*, *Ajita*, *Kāraṇa*, *Cintya*, *Dīpta* and *Suprabheda* are later productions.³⁷

The Provenance and Date of Composition

Regarding provenance and date of composition of *Āgama*-s, large body of evidences suggest that a few of them are written in North India

while rests are in South India. And the *Āgama*-s thus produced later in South India can be easily distinguished as they tend towards following the vedāntic line of thinking. Such texts explain the abstract principles in purely vedantic terms and as a result the metaphysical background of *Siddhāntāgama*-s found to have modified or reworked in later texts. To this list, the *Āgama*-s which are reworked later following the lead of *Vedānta*, *Ajita*, *Suprabheda*, *Yogaja* and *Cintya*, can be added. There are strong grounds to substantiate this point and a good piece of evidence in this dimension can be extracted from Goodall's preface to the *Parākhya Tantra*. There he has seen given relative chronology of principal *Siddhāntāgama*-s and tried to distinguish later south Indian compositions from the scheme of twenty-eight *Āgama*-s. In the list given he has identified the *Āgama*-s and *Upāgama*-s of pre-twelfth century namely, *Pārameśvara*, *Niśvāsa*, *Svāyaṃbhuvāsūtrasaṃgraha*, *Rauravasūtrasaṃgraha*, *Kiraṇa*, *Parākhya*/ *Saurabheya*, *Sārdhatriśatikālottara*, *Dviśatikālottara*, *Saptaśatikakālottara*, *Jñānapañcāśika*, *Śatikakālottara*, *Bṛhatkālottara*, *Mṛgendra*, *Mātaṅga*, *Sarvajñottara*, *Mohacūḍottara* and *Mayasaṃgraha* respectively based on the criteria that either the presence of their manuscripts in Nepalese or the reference to or commentaries on them by early *Siddhāntika* commentators could be taken to mean that they were known at that time.³⁸ The most obvious features of pre-twelfth

Siddhāntatantra-s by which they can be distinguished from the latter are they do not seem to be influenced by *Vedānta* and were not concerned about public worship in temples.³⁹

The *Upāgama*-s

Each of these twenty-eight *Mūlāgama*-s have a set of *Upāgama*-s associated with them.⁴⁰ They are also as important as *Mūlāgama*-s. Structurally, some of the *Upāgama*-s follow the system of four-fold classification of contents of *Mūlāgama*-s.

The *Paddhati* Texts

It is conventionally believed that *Āgama*-s are not compositions of human authors rather they are revealed to different divinely beings. On the contrary, the *Paddhati* texts are believed to be human compositions. The *Paddhati* texts liturgical canons devoted to systematically order and elaborate on ritual procedures found scattered in *Āgama*-s. Since details of many of authors the *Paddhati* texts are known to us they can be situated in the historical background. Here a definition of the *Paddhati* text can be of great help to get a clear picture of its basic characteristics. To reproduce Alexis Sanderson's citation of a passage of *Bhaṭṭarāmakāṇṭha* from his *Sārdhatrīśatīkālottaravṛtti*:

*paddhatiḥ pratiśāstraṃ śrutasya tatsāmarthyāpekṣitasya ca
mantratantrānuṣṭhānāya saṅkṣepāt krameṇābhidhānaṃ
yajurvedādaṃ yajñasūtrādivat.*

For any scripture a *Paddhati* is a text which enables the performance of the rituals [of that scripture] along with the mantras [that accompany them] by succinctly arranging in order [of performance] (i) the [instructions] explicitly stated [in that scripture but] dispersed in various places [throughout its length], and (ii) whatever [else] those explicit statements imply. An example is the *Yajñasūtra* in the case of the *Yajurveda*.⁴¹

There had been numerous composers of texts of this genre and most of their preceptorial lineages were traced successfully by either the composers themselves or later writers. For instance, *Aghoraśivācāryapaddhati* enlists fourteen *paddhatikārā*-s by name.⁴² But this is not presented in a chronological order and the works of some of them are not found yet. The list includes wide range of authors belonged to different geographical sections of India ranging from Kashmir to South India.

The available and most influential *Paddhati* texts are *Naimittikakramānusandhāna* of Brahmaśaṃbhu (A.D. 938),

Siddhāntasārapaddhati of Bhojadeva (A.D. 11th century), *Kriyākāṇḍakramāvalī* or *Somaśaṃbhupaddhati* of Somaśaṃbhu (A.D. 1095), *Kriyākramadyotikā* of Aghoraśiva (A.D. 1157)⁴³ *Jñānarātnāvalī* of Jñānaśiva (A.D. 12th century) *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati* of Īśānaśivaguru (A.D. 12th century) and *Siddhāntaśekhara* of Viśvanātha. Proliferation of these generic texts could be taken as a pointer which suggests how fast the temple cult in India was growing up.

The *Saiddhāntika* Exegetes

Apart from the *Paddhatikāra*-s, Kashmir is also known to have produced a line of tradition of learned *Saiddhāntika* exegetes. They have played a pivotal role in spreading the Śaiva religion as they succeeded in providing the strong intellectual foundation to *Śaivasiddhānta* through their writings. In their style of presentation they echoed style of argument of traditional Indian philosophical systems, especially *Nyāya*. Among them, the Kashmirian exegete *Sadyojyotiś*'s⁴⁴ *vṛtti* on early *Saiddhāntika* scriptures viz., *Svāyaṃbhuvasūtrasaṅgraha*, and exegesis of *Rauravasūtrasaṅgraha* (*mokṣakārikā*, *bhogakārikā*, *parāmokṣanirāsa-kārikā*), his prose commentary on the principal parts of the doctrinal section of *Mokṣakārikā* known as *Svāyaṃbhuvavṛtti* and an independent work *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* (a philosophical treatise in which he propounds his

view of *Saiddhāntika* ontology and soteriology and defends it against the contrary positions of *mīmāṃsaka*-s, *naiyāyika*-s, *sāṃkhya*-s, *vedāntin*-s, *pāñcarātri*ka-s, *pāśupata*-s and *Buddhist*-s)⁴⁵ were very influential. Likewise the *Mṛgendravṛtti*, commentary on *Svāyaṃbhuvavṛtti*, *Śaranniśā*, and a long commentary on *Tattvasaṅgraha* of *Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇakaṇṭha*, commentaries on *Mātaṅgapārameśvara*, *Svāyaṃbhuvāsūtrasaṅgraha*, *Kiraṇa* (first twelve chapters) and *Sārdhatriśatīkālottara* and commentaries in prose on *Mokṣakārikā*, the *Parāmokṣanirāsakārikā* and *Tattvatrayanirṇaya* and *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* of his son *Bhaṭṭarāmakaṇṭha-II* and commentary on *saiddhāntika pratiṣṭhāntara Mayasaṅgraha* by *Bhaṭṭavidyākaṇṭha-II* (*Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha*'s pupil) and *Ratnatrayaparīkṣā* of *Śrīkaṇṭha* etc. also contributed much to development of *Śaivasiddhānta* into well-defined philosophical system.⁴⁶

Later Phase of Śaivasiddhānta

Leaving no trace of the existence of *Śaivasiddhānta* by the time of Muslim rule in Kashmir around thirteenth century A.D., it had its later developments in Tamil soil and still it continues to exist in South India. New works have been produced as independent texts rightly rooted in the principles of *Śaivasiddhānta*. This particular period in the history is also marked by the production of commentaries on fundamental texts and

Paddhati-s. Among them the contributions made by Aghoraśiva (12th century A.D.), which include independent texts and commentaries and a *Paddhati* text namely, the *Aghoraśivācāryapaddhati* are noteworthy. He is followed by *Trilocanaśivācārya* who had also helped to spread the *Saiddhāntika* ideologies through his independent writings like *Siddhāntasārāvalī*, *Siddhāntasamuccaya* and so on. Later developments are marked by a shift from the medium of Sanskrit to Tamil. This movement is triggered by the composition of *Ñānāmīṛtam* of Vākācamuṇivar (12th century A.D.). Following its composition the *Civaññāpōtam* of Meykaṇṭār (13th century A.D.) became the milestone in the history of Tamil *Śaivasiddhānta* in the sense that later writings were totally based on it.

There are two versions of the text (i) *Śivajñānabodha*- a Sanskrit text believed to be a part of *Rauravāgama* and (ii) *Civaññāpōtam* of Meykaṇṭār. Between them the Sanskrit version has yielded several commentaries. They are 1. *vṛtti* by Sadāśivaśivācārya (14th century A.D.), 2. *Śivajñānabodhopanyāsa* and *Śivajñānasiddhisvapakṣadrṣṭāntasaṅgraha*⁴⁷ of Nigamajñānadeśika (also the author of *Ātmārthapūjāpaddhati*, (16th century A.D.), 3. three commentaries by *Śivāgrayogin* (16th century A.D.) namely a. *Laghuṭīkā*, b. *Saṅgrahabhāṣya* and c.

Bṛhadbhāṣya, 4. *vṛtti* by Jñānaprakāśa (16th -17th centuries A.D.), and 5. *Jñānāvaraṇabhāṣya* by Veḷḷiyampalavāṇattampirāṇ (17th century A.D.).⁴⁸

The commentaries on the *Civañāṇapōtam* are 1. *Civañāṇacittiyār* by Aruḷṇanti Śivācārya (13th century A.D.)⁴⁹ 2. *Civappirakācam* by Umāpati (14th century A.D.) and 3. *Māpāṭiyam* (*Mahābhāṣya*) by Civañāṇacuvāmikaḷ (18th century A.D.).

Besides the texts belonging to the *Civañāṇapōtam* School there are a few more works left. The distinguishable characteristic of such works is that they differ considerably from the ideologies of this traditional line of thinking. The texts that are composed between the 14th and 15th centuries A.D. namely, *Tattuvaviḷakkam* (of Campantacaraṇālayar), *Tattuvappirakācam*, *Tiruneriviḷakkam*, *Vaḷḷal Cāttiram* and *Meymmoḷicaritai* belong to such a category. It is almost around this period that the principal *Āgama*-s of *Śaivasiddhānta* particularly *Sarvajñānottara* and *Devīkālottara* were restructured and reinterpreted in accordance with theological concepts of Tamil version of *Śaivasiddhānta*.

One of the important differences between classical Śaivism and Tamil *Śaivasiddhānta* lies in the conception of liberation. As mentioned earlier, *Āgama*-s postulate liberation as becoming equal to Śiva but for the latter the soul never remains ontologically distinct from Śiva after

liberation. Certainly this is a later soteriological development but this concept of non-dual existence of the Soul remains the hallmark of South Indian Śaivism.⁵⁰

Apart from these texts and their commentaries the devotional *Tevāram* hymns of Śaiva devotees (known as Nāyanār-s), were also helped much to the spread and development of Śaivism in South India. They not only sung hymns in praise of Śiva but also were instrumental in promoting the cult of devotion, which brought a sea change in the religious outlook of followers and common men as well.

The *Bhairava tantra-s*

Generally, the *Bhairavatantra-s* present their contents in the form of a conversation between the Bhairava and his consort. As is mentioned above, in the scheme of classifications of *tantra-s*, *Bhairavagāma-s* belong to Right Current of scriptures (*dakṣiṇasrotas*)⁵¹ because they are said to have issued from the southern face of *Sadāśiva*.

In the *pīṭha* system of classification *Bhairavatantra-s* are classified into four *pīṭha-s*⁵² namely, *Mantrapīṭha*, *Vidyāpīṭha*, *Maṇḍalapīṭha* and *Mudrāpīṭha*.⁵³ Among these the *tantra-s* of *mudrā* and *Maṇḍalapīṭha* had been considered to be relatively less important.

Mantrapīṭha

The *tantra*-s of *Mantrapīṭha* are less extensive than that of *Vidyāpīṭha*. The *Mantrapīṭha* is known so because of the predominance of masculine *mantra*-s in ritual and other practices in the texts belong to this division. The scriptures of this cult are centered on the worship of *Svacchandabhairava* and his consort *Aghoreśvarī*.⁵⁴

The principal *tantra*-s belong to *Mantrapīṭha* are *Svacchanda*, *Unmatta*, *Asitāṅga*, *Ruru*, *Caṇḍa*, *Krodha*, *Jhaṅkāra* and *Kapālīśa*.⁵⁵ The *Svacchandatantra* enlists only four of them i.e., *Svacchanda*, *Caṇḍa*, *Krodha* and *Unmatta*.⁵⁶ But according to *Srīkaṇṭhīyaṣaṃhitā*, there are twenty four *Dakṣiṇa tantra*-s.⁵⁷

Alexis Sanderson's observation as to how the underlying structure of practices of the *Śaivasiddhānta* differs from that of the *Mantramārga* sheds considerable light on the matter. He notes:

In Śaiva Siddhānta, Śiva (Sadāśiva) was worshipped alone. In *Mantrapīṭha* he is joined in worship by his consorts as the personification of Śakti. Iconically she is equal. But the larger ritual context shows that she is still subordinate.⁵⁸

He further notes:

The Traditions of *Bhairava Tantras* are *Kāpālika*, the basic form of their ascetic observance being that of the skull (*kapālavrata* / *mahāvrata*). The difference between this and *Lākula* form of this observance is largely a matter of the basic difference of the *Mantramārga* stated above. The term *Kāpālika* is reserved here for this *Mantramārgic* segment of the *Śaiva* culture of the cremation grounds.⁵⁹

I. *Vidyāpīṭha (Śākta-śaiva)*

The canons of the *Vidyāpīṭha* are associated with the highest level of esoteric practices and revolve around the cult of *Yoginī*-s or female spirits. The ritual cult taught by scriptures of this division is marked by, as Sanderson puts it, "its embeddedness in the intensely transgressive tradition of *Kāpālika* asceticism".⁶⁰ As mentioned earlier the scriptures *Vidyāpīṭha* is again divided into two viz., *Yāmalatantra*-s and *Śaktitantra*-s.

a. *Yāmalatantra*-s

It is in the *Yāmalatantra*-s one could see the *Śakti* as being moved to central stage and the *Bhairava* becoming her subordinate. The primary meaning of the term '*Yāmala*' is "a couple in union"⁶¹ and commonly

refers to union of God with his consort. For instance; the divine pair of *Brahmayāmala* comprises of deities *Kapālīśabhairava* and Great Goddesses, whose names include *Caṇḍā Kāpālīnī*, *Aghorī* and *Bhairavi*.⁶² The texts belonging to this classification are *Brahmayāmala* (also known as *Picumata* and by two titular epithets *Navākṣarādhikaraṇa* and *Dvādaśasāhasra* in scriptural sources),⁶³ *Rudrayāmala*, *Viṣṇuyāmala*, *Skanda-yāmala* and *Umāyamala*.⁶⁴ Regarding the significance of titles of these texts Shaman Hatley in his recent Study on the early Śaiva cult of *Yoginī*-s remarks that "extant lists show that their titles were formed by appending- *Yāmala* to the names of brahmanical deities, or in some cases other mythical figures. Then he draws attention to the fact that these brahmanical deities "serve as counterparts to and namesakes for the mother goddesses (*mātṛ*-s). This is evidenced from the fact that *Yāmalatantra*-s are also described as *Mātṛtantra*-s."⁶⁵ These *tantra*-s are the earliest sources known to deal with early *kaula* rites: initiations ritualized sex, visionary practices and induced possession.

b. Śaktitantra-s

Being the most esoteric revelations, *Śaktitantra*-s carry forward the central observances of *kāpālīka* tradition in most complete way. The cult of *Yoginī* permeates all the levels of these *tantra*-s and the *kaulism*⁶⁶

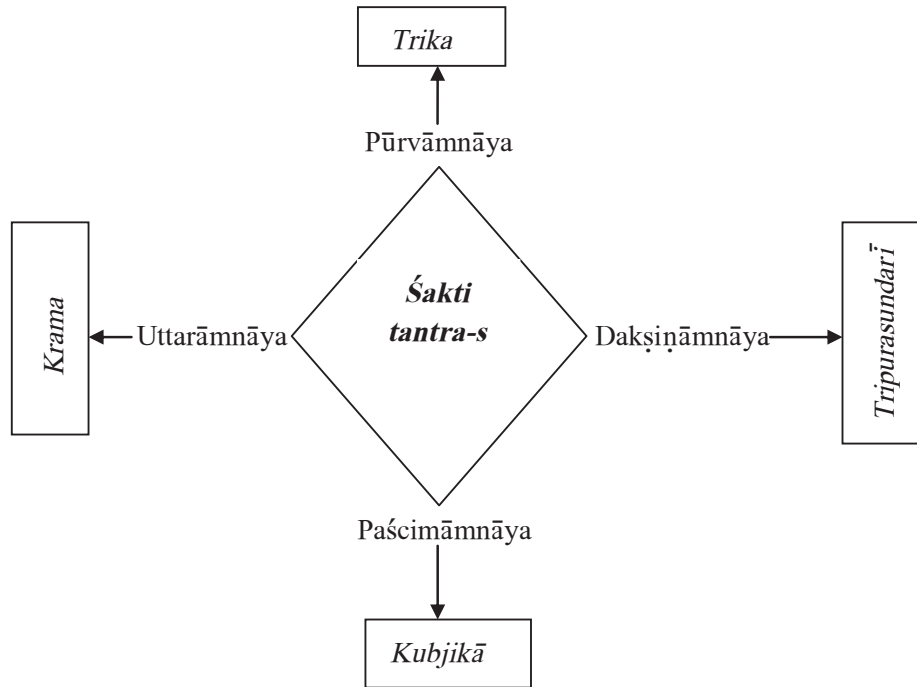
developed from within this cult.⁶⁷ The "*Yoginī*", as noted by Hatley, "designates a spectrum of female sacred figures many of which in different contexts bear distinct names."⁶⁸ David White offers a rather clear picture of characteristic features of *Yoginī-s* as:

The *Yoginīs* whose cults were central to Kaula practice had the following features: (1) they were a group of powerful, sometimes martial, female divinities with whom human female "witches" were identified in ritual practice; (2) their power was intimately connected to the flow of blood, both their own sexual and menstrual emissions, and the blood of their animal (and human?) victims; (3) they were essential to Tantric initiation in which they initiated male practitioners through fluid transactions via their "mouths"; (4) they were possessed of the power of flight; (5) they took form of humans, animals, or birds, and often inhabited trees; (6) they were often arrayed in circles; (7) their temples were generally located in isolated areas, on hilltops or prominences and were usually round and often hypaethral; and (8) they were never portrayed as practicing yoga for the simple reason that yoga as we know it had not yet been invented.⁶⁹

Though White's study and his style of argument had succeeded in providing clear insight into the cult of the *Yoginī*-s, many of his notions have been recently challenged by Shaman Hatley in his Ph. D Thesis "*The Brahmayāmalatantra and Early Śaiva Cult of Yoginīs*"⁷⁰. Hatley adds a few more characteristics of *Yoginī*-s, which include (1) their appearance as even mortal *Yoginī*-s. As for evidence he turns to *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* where *Yoginī*-s are depicted as of two types: *kulajā* or "born in clans", called also *mānuṣya*, "human"; and *devatāḥ*, "deities/goddesses"; (2) their organization into clans (*kula*, *gotra*)- In Śaiva sources they appear as an organized clans of seven or eight Mothers (*mātrī*-s); (3) theriomorphism- they appear in many forms including horses, lions, birds, snakes and their imagery ranges from the horrific, grotesque and martial to comic, exuberant and musical; (4) *kāpālīka* cult and iconography- they are presented often bearing skulls, bone ornaments and skull staves (*khaṭvāṅga*) and they are associated with cremation grounds; (5) danger, purity and power- they may appear dangerous to non-initiates and fatal to apostates. With regard to pure and impure objects, practitioners offer wine or blood as *argha* while *Yoginī*-s will return this by giving impure *caru*; (6) protection and transmission of esoteric teachings; (7) flight- they are often pictured as sky-travelers.⁷¹

The *Śaktitantra*-s are further subdivided into four transmissions (*āmnāya*-s) i.e., known by the name of four directions viz., (i) *Pūrvāmnāya* (eastern), (ii) *Uttarāmnāya* (northern), (iii) *Paścimāmnāya* (western) and (iv) *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* (southern). The four *āmnāya*-s have certain tantric cults associated with them namely, *Trika*, *Cult of Tripurasundarī*, *Krama* and cult of *Kubjikā*. Each of these has distinctive pantheons, *mantra*-s, *maṇḍala*-s, mythical saints and myths of origin.

The Division of *Āmnāya*-s and Cults



(Figure: I.2.)

The pattern of division of *āmnāya*-s and cults associated with them can be illustrated as in the (Figure: I. 2.) shown above.

i. *Pūrvāmnāya* (Eastern Transmission): The *Kaula Trika*⁷²-This is centered on the cult of triad of goddesses (*triḱa*) namely *Parā* (*pramāṭṛ*), *Aparā* (*prameya*) and *Parāparā* (*pramāṇa*). These goddesses are worshiped either alone or with subordinated *Bhairava*-s. In their masculinised worship, variant of *Trika Parā*, *Aparā*, and *Parāparā* are worshiped as the powers of *Triśīrobhairava* (note that here the Bhairava is three headed).⁷³ The principal scriptures that form the part of this line of transmission are *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, *Mālinīvijayottara* and *Tantrasadbhāva* and *Tantrāloka* of Abhinavagupta.

ii. *Uttarāmnāya* (Northern Transmission): This is believed to be directly transmitted by *Yoginī*-s. The three major systems belong to the *Uttarāmnāya* are (a) the doctrine of *Mata*, (b) the *Krama* system also known as *Mahārtha* and (c) the cult of *Guhyakālī*.

a) *Mata*-This cult is rooted in the tradition of *Jayadratha yāmala*. The worship of twelve *Kālī*-s is the prominent feature of this cult. The deities of this cult are conspicuous by their animal faces or numerous faces in addition to principal human face. Three goddesses occupy prominent position in the ritual system of the cult.

They are the *Trailokyaḍāmara*, *Matacakreśvarī* and *Ghoraghoratarā*. *Cincīṇīmatasārasaṅgraha* is the other important text dealing with all the details of *kaula* form of *mata* and its system of ritual.

b) *Krama*- it is known for worship of 13 /12 *Kālī*-s along with series of sets of deities in affixed sequence (*krama*). The sequence follow the four phases of worship of *Kālī* namely *ṣṛṣṭikrama*, *sthitikrama*, *saṃhāarakrama* and *anākhyākarma*. To this *Kramasadbhāva* adds the fifth phase called *bhāsākrama*.⁷⁴ The fundamental scriptures of the system are the *Devīpañcāśataka* and *Kramasadbhāva*.

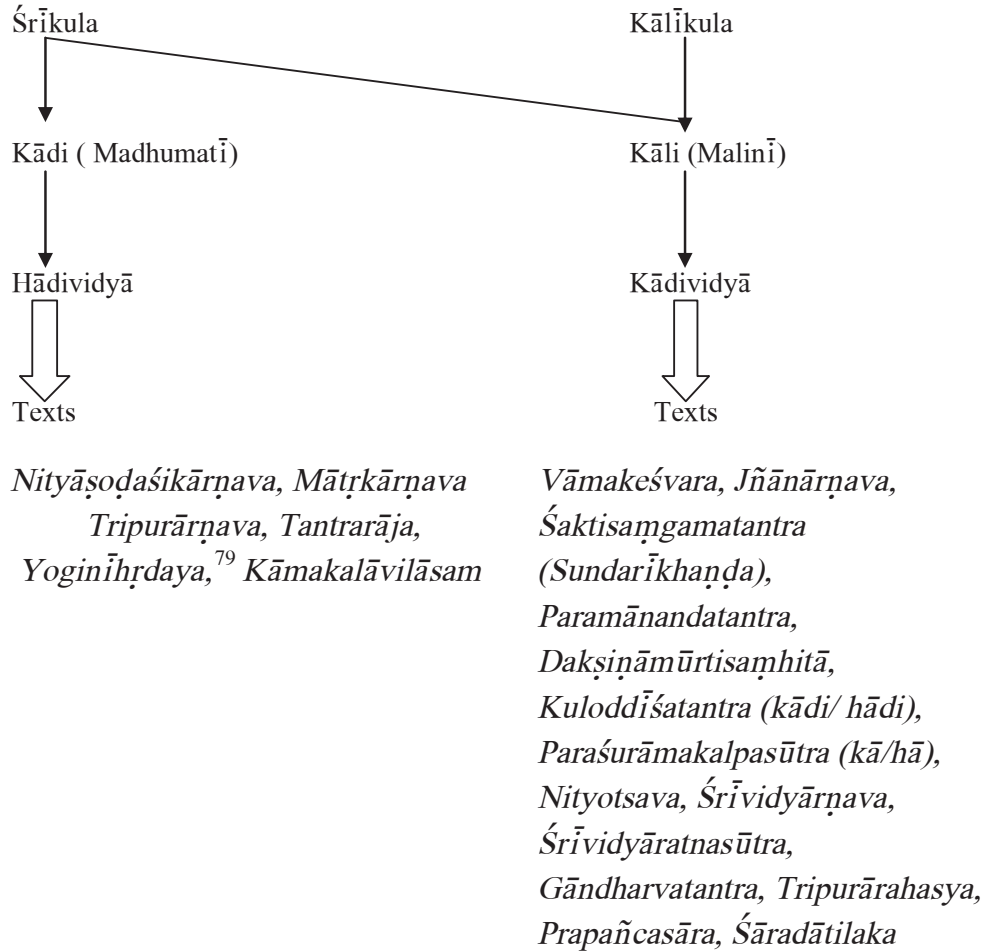
c) The cult of the *Guhyakālī*-the order of worship and pantheon of the cult are akin to that of *Mata*.

iii. *Paścimāmnāya* (the western transmission): This system is centered on the cult of the goddess *Kubjikā*. The word *Kubjikā* literally means humped-back and she is visualized so in the scriptures belong to western transmission. Mark identifies her early prototypical designations as *Khañjinī*, *Laghvikā*, *Kukārā*, *Kujā* (with its variants *kujāmbikā*, *Śrīkujāmbikā*, *Kujeśī* and *Kujeśvarī*),⁷⁵ *Kubjī*, *Vakrā* etc. In her worship the trident of *Trika* is replaced by a triangle.⁷⁶ The principal texts dealing with the details of her worship *Manthānabhairava tantra*-it calls itself as *Caturviṃśatisāhasra* and *Kubjikāmata*. Apart from these fundamental

texts, there are a good number of other texts dealing with the same subject. They are; two versions of *Manthānabhairavatantra* namely, *Ambāmata-saṃhitā* and *Kulakaulinīmata*, texts related to these primary sources viz., *Kularatnodyota*, *Śrīmatasāra*, *Śrīmatasārasaṅgraha*, *Siddhapañcāśikhā* and *Kularatnapañcakāvatāra*, some minor texts like *Nigūḍhajñānasadbhāva-tantra*, *Kulamūlaratnapañcakāvatāra*, *Kubjikopaniṣad*, *Kubjikātantra*, and short ones like *Siddhapañcāśikha*, *Kramasūtrādhikāra* and *Cinciṇīmata-sārasamuccaya*.⁷⁷

iv. *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* (southern transmission): This is the cult of *Tripurasundarī* also known as the cult of *Śrīvidyā*. She is worshipped in the *Śrīcakra* with her retinues. Kerala is considered to be one of its main centers and it is a living cult there. The great *advaita* philosopher Śaṅkarācārya is said to have propagated this cult in south India. According to *Śrīvidyārṇavatāntra*, the scriptures of *Śrīvidyā* are found to have classified into *Śrīkula* and *Kālīkula*. The former is divided into *Kādi* (also called as *Madhumatī*) and *Kālī* (also known as *Mālinī*).⁷⁸ Between the *Kādi* (*kādimata*) is said to be *Hādividyāpradhāna*, while *Kālī* (*kālīkāmata*) is said to be *Kādividyāpradhāna*. The below diagram (Figure: I.3.) will explain the complex classification pattern and the principal texts belonging to *Śrīkula* and *Kālīkula* traditions.

The Division of the Cults of *Śrīvidyā* and their Scriptures



(Figure: I.3.)

As the diagram suggests there are two ways of classifying canons of the *Śrīvidyā* cult namely, they are divided first into *Śrīkula* and *Kālīkula* and further divisions are made under these two heads. In the second method all the divisions proceed from the *Śrīkula*. The word *vidyā* denotes *mantra* and the *kādividyā* refers to a *mantra* beginning with the letter *ka*.

The differences between these two sub-divisions lie not only the letters of *mantra* but system of worship also.

Mudrāpīṭha

This division follows the path of *Mantrapīṭha*. The three principal *tantra*-s form the part of this classification is *Hṛdbheda*, *Māṭṛbheda* and *Kubjikāmata*.

II. *Maṇḍalapīṭha*

This is said to be equally present in all the other *pīṭha*-s.

The *Tantra*-s of Kashmir Śaivism

The Kashmir Śaivism is still a subject for academic pursuit for many eastern as well as western scholars even today. Several important studies have appeared particularly during last three decades and every year new books are coming out under the title or related to "*Kashmir Śaivism*". Every study claims to be written from different perspectives. One of the main reasons that deeply engage the scholars in the works of Kashmirian intellectuals is their high literary standard coupled with unfathomable intellectual depth. Unless and until scholars are able to rise to level of those Kashmirian preceptors intellectually at least, their works contribute little, if not misleading, to understanding the depth of doctrines

of Kashmirian intellectuals. The works produced by them comprise either of independent treatise or extensive commentaries. Kashmir is also known for giving birth to high order, learned exegetes. Wallis observes that their discourse concerning the nature of the reality is built on three levels.

[. . .] their arguments concerning the nature of the reality are built on three levels; through reason, through appeal to scriptures, and through appeal to personal experience. these three methods of discourse corresponded to three spheres of discourse: the first method could be used in debate with Buddhists and other non-Śaivas, the second in debate with Śaivas schools of other than that of the author, and all three in instruction of the author's own disciples.⁸⁰

Generally, there are said to have three schools of Śaivism developed in Kashmir. They are the *Spanda*, *Pratyabhijñā* and *Trika*. Since the fundamental doctrines and texts of the *Trika* School are discussed already, the brief sketch of distinguishing characteristics of other two schools is given below.

The *Spanda* School

Vasugupta (c. 825-875 A.D.) is considered to be founding father of the *Spanda* school. His *Śivasūtra* features first in the chronological order

of scriptures of Kashmir Śaivism. The legend has it that the *sūtra*-s were revealed to him in a dream as to have been written on a rock. His work *Śivasūtra* is said to be a verbatim of what was engraved on the rock. Later on, it was his disciple *Kallaṭa* (c.850-900 A.D.) who carried further *Vasugupta*'s teaching through his *Spandakārikā*.⁸¹ The works attributed to *Kallaṭa* are the *Spandasarvasva*, *Tattvārthacintāmaṇī*, *Spandasūtra*⁸² and *Madhuvāhinī*. Several commentaries were written on the *Spandakārikā*. They are 1) *Spandavṛtti*- this is *Kallaṭa*'s own short commentary 2) *Spandavivṛti* (*Spandavivaraṇasāramātra*) by Rāmakaṇṭha, 3) *Spandanirṇaya* and *Spandasandoha* by Kṣemarāja and 4) *Spandapradīpikā* by Utpalabhaṭṭa.

The Pratyabhijñā School

Somānanda (c. 900-950) is considered to be the founder of *Pratyabhijñā* School. He expounds the basic tenets of the school through his *Śivadṛṣṭi*.⁸³ But the system gets its name after Utpaladeva (both son as well as disciple of *Somānanda*, 9th-10th century A.D), whom Wallis rightly describes as "who possessed one of the greatest intellects and one of the most passionately devotional hearts in the whole documented history of the non-dual Śiva tantra."⁸⁴ He is the author of the *Īśvara-pratyabhijñākārikā* in which he expanded further the teachings of his

preceptor in a relatively simple and intelligible manner. He is known to have written a commentary on his own work known as *Īśvara-pratyabhijñākārikāvivṛti* and another one called *Īśvarapratyabhijñāṭīkā*. Later on the great philosopher Abhinavagupta had written two commentaries, one short and one long, on the same. They are the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī* (*laghvī*) and *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛtivismarśinī* (*bṛhatī*).

Utpala is also known to have written a group of three works, known as "*Siddhitrayī*" namely the *Ajaḍapramāṭṛsiddhi*, *Īśvarasiddhi*, *Sambandhasiddhi* and two *vṛtti*-s on them called as *Īśvarasiddhivṛtti* and *Sambandhasiddhivṛtti*. The hymn "*Śivastrotrāvalī*"⁸⁵ is also attributed to him.

Lakṣmaṇagupta appears next in the line of tradition. None of his writings, if any, survives today. Subsequently it was his disciple Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025 A.D.) who took the system into its heights.

Abhinavagupta and His Works

Being a prolific writer, Abhinavagupta, the great intellect and tantric preceptor India has ever produced, carried further the teachings of his teachers and gave firm philosophical as well as gnostic foundation to

then existing non-dual Śaiva traditions of Kashmir. His works can be categorized into three heads 1. Commentaries 2. Independent works and 3. Hymns. Some of his well known works are as following;

Commentaries

1) *Parātriśikā vivaraṇa* 2) *Bhagavadgītārthasaṅgraha* and 3) *Śivadr̥ṣṭyālocana*.

Independent Works

1) *Tantrāloka* (his magnum opus, to it Jayaratha has written an extensive commentary called 'Viveka') 2) *Tantrasāra* 3) *Tantravaṭadhānikā* 4) *Mālinī-vijayavārttika* and 5) *Paramārthasāra* (this has been commented by a South Indian Yogarāja (second half of 11th century A.D.).

Hymns

1) *Anuttarāṣṭikā* 2) *Paramārthadvādaśikā* 3) *Paramārthacarcā* 4) *Mahopadeśaviṃśatikā* 5) *Kramastotraṃ* 6) *Bhairavastavaṃ* 7) *Dehasthadevatācakrastotraṃ* and 8) *Anubhavanivedanaṃ*.

Literary productions did not cease after Abhinavagupta but it continued triumphant march for at least two more centuries until the Muslim invasion in the 13th century A.D. put an end to all developments.

Among the Abhinavagupta's successors Kṣemarāja stands out as gigantic figure who furthered the teachings of his master mostly through his extensive and learned commentaries. His works are as following;

- 1) *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayaṃ* 2) *Parāpraveśikā* 3) *Sivasūtravimarśinī* 4) *Spanda-nirṇayaṃ* 5) *Spandasandohaṃ* 6) *Stavacintāmaṇi vivṛti-* a commentary on the *Stavacintāmaṇi* of Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa 7) *Svacchanda udyota-* a commentary on *Svacchandatantra*, 8) *Netrodyota-* a commentary on *Netratantra* 9) *Vijñānabhairavodyota* 10) *Śivastrotrāvalī-ṭikā* and 11. *Sāmbapañcāśikāṭīkā*.

These are the principal writings of founders of each school and their immediate followers. But the picture will not be complete if the works of same stature produced in Kashmir are not included in the list. The other important works of this nature are as following;

- 1) *Śivasūtravārtika* of Varadarāja (11th century A.D., a well known South Indian disciple of Kṣemarāja 2) *Paramārthasāravivṛti* by Yogarāja (11th century A.D., another disciple of Kṣemarāja) 3) *Tantrālokaviveka* and a commentary on *Vāmakeśvarīmata* by Jayaratha (12th century A.D.) 4) *Mahārthamañjarī* (a text of *Kaula* tradition written in Maharashtrian Apabhraṃśa language) of *Maheśvarānandanātha* (12th century A.D.) 5) *Mahānayaprakāśa* (written in Kashmiri Apabhraṃśa) of Rājānaka

Śrīkaṇṭha (12th century A.D.) 6) *Devīnāmaṇḍalā* of Sahib Kaul and 7) *Bhāskarī*- Bhāskarakaṇṭha's commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Vimarśinī* on *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*.

Vaiṣṇavism

The *Bhāgavatism* is said to be the earliest Vaiṣṇava tradition, for there are several inscriptional evidences particularly of Gupta period suggesting the existence of cult by the epigraphic usage of the word '*paramabhāgavata*', '*mahābhāgavata*' etc. In earlier sources it denoted those who are devoted to cult of Nārāyaṇa, but in later periods it even meant to include the yogic and ascetic undercurrents of the cult in addition to devotion to Nārāyaṇa.⁸⁶

The Classifications of Tantric Vaiṣṇava Scriptures

There are two divisions of tantric Vaiṣṇava scriptures namely, *Pāñcarātra* and *Vaikhānasa*.⁸⁷ As a cult, the *Pāñcarātra* system is believed to be the earliest Vaiṣṇava tradition that existed in Kashmir even before the predominance of Śaivism.⁸⁸

The *Pāñcarātra* Cult

The earliest reference to the word *Pāñcarātra* is found in *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (XIII.6.1.1, 7.9) where Nārāyaṇa is said to have

performed a *pāñcarātra puruṣamedha* sacrifice for five days and nights after which he is said to have surpassed all beings and become the entire universe.⁸⁹ It is also said to have connected with the lost Vedicśākhā (school) *Ekāyana*.⁹⁰ The *Nārāyaṇīyaparvan* (XII.321-329) of the great epic *Mahābhārata* is earliest known source to refer to the doctrinal and ritual characteristics of the ancient *Pāñcarātra* tradition.

The term *Pāñcarātra* is interpreted in a number of ways within the texts of *Pāñcarātra* themselves.⁹¹ Interestingly, the tail-end word *rātra* has yielded to wide range of interpretations including night, day and night, knowledge⁹² and ignorance. So texts seem to be interpreting the term *Pāñcarātra* based on the preference for meaning of the word *rātra*.

F.O. Schrader, who pioneered the studies on *Pāñcarātra* and made an extensive survey of available texts, has observed that the tradition's name can be traced back to one of its doctrines, namely the doctrine of Viṣṇu's five forms of manifestation namely *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *antaryāmin* and *arcā*.⁹³ Whereas according to J.A. Van Buitenen, the name *Pāñcarātra* derives from its cult specific ritual practices rather than from its philosophy, as these practices form the main content of the *Samhitā*-
s.⁹⁴

The *Pāñcarātra* literature

It is held traditionally that the numbers of the *Pāñcarātra* canons are 108. Against this conventional belief F.O. Schrader has brought out the details of 210 *Samhitā*-s in his pioneering study of *Pāñcarātra* canons 'Introduction to the *Pāñcarātra* and the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*'.⁹⁵

Among the *Samhitā*-s the three namely *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, *Paṇḍikarasaṃhitā* and *Sātvatasamhitā*, also known as "*Ratnatraya*",⁹⁶ are considered to be most authoritative.⁹⁷ Notably later texts seem to have listed a group of six more texts as authoritative. They are *Sanatkumāra*, *Padma*, *Parama*, *Padmodbhava*, *Māhendra* and *Kāṇva Samhitā*-s.⁹⁸

As noted by several scholars that Kashmirian polymath *Utpalavaiṣṇava*, who flourished in Kashmir in the tenth century A.D., had seen quoted from *Sātvata* and *Jayākhyā* in his commentary on *Spandakārikā*, which means both these texts were well known relatively earlier than the other texts.⁹⁹ But recently Diwakar Acharya has come forward with evidences of even earlier *Samhitā*-s namely *Jayottaratantra*, *Svāyambhuvapāñcarātra*, *Devāmṛtapāñcarātra* and *Vāsudevakalpa* and he has also started editing these texts.¹⁰⁰

With respect to the date and provenance of *Samhitā*-s, O. Schrader and Mitsunori Matsubara argue that the *ratnatraya*-s and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* were likely to have been written in Kashmir; and the rest after the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition got well established in South India.¹⁰¹ O. Schrader attests eighth century A.D. to *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* (around 600 A.D. according to Mitsunori) whereas Sanderson argues that it postdates *Pratyabhijñā Hṛdaya* of Kṣemarāja (1000-1050 A.D). And also he puts forth substantial evidences to show *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*'s south Indian origin which is also against the views of Schrader. Rest of the *Samhitā*-s, according to Mitsunori, are much later compositions and his chronological arrangement of *Samhitā*-s is as following; *Parama*, *Sanatkumāra* (later than 600 A.D. and earlier than 900 A.D.), *Īśvara*, *Parameśvara*, *Nāradīya*, *Lakṣmītantra*, *Viṣvaksena*, *Padma*, *Viśvāmitra*, *Śeṣa*, *Aniruddha*, *Srīpraśna*, *Viṣṇu*, *Brahmā*, *Śāṇḍīya*, *Bṛhadbrahma* and *Nāradapāñcarātra*.¹⁰² V. Varadachari has observed that of these *Lakṣmītantra* and *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* have devoted comparatively more chapters on process of creation than rituals. And the texts like *Ānandasamhitā*, *Īśvarasamhitā*, *Nāradīyasamhitā*, *Pādmāsamhitā*, *Bhāradvājasamhitā*, *Mārkaṇḍeyasamhitā*, *Lakṣmītantra*, *Viśvāmitra samhitā*, *Viṣṇutantra* and *Sanatkumārasamhitā* have more than one

version.¹⁰³ Of these *Īśvara-saṃhitā*, *Pādmasaṃhitā* and *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā* are predominantly South Indian.

Just like *Siddhāntāgama*-s, an ideal *Saṃhitā* is said to following the four-fold system of classification of contents. But most of extant texts do not conform to this general rule. Remarkably, the *Padmasaṃhitā* and *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā* (*brahmarātra*, *śivarātra*, *indrārātra* and *ṛṣirātra*) are the only two texts containing the four *pāda*-s. Similar to some of *Āgama*-s, certain *Saṃhitā*-s have also been divided into three or more sections. For example: the *Jñānāmṛtasāra* has been divided into five parts, called as *rātra*-s. The *Nārāyaṇīyasamhitā* is found to be divided into three *kāṇḍā*-s called *jñānavaibhava-kāṇḍa*, *yajñavaibhava-kāṇḍa*-and *iṣṭivaibhava-kāṇḍa*. Quite interestingly, *kriyā* or *caryā* sections of many of these *Saṃhitā*-s are preserved intact, but not *vidyā* and *yoga* sections.

In another system of classification the *Pāñcarātra* texts are classified into four heads viz., *āgamasiddhānta*, *mantrasiddhānta*, *tantrasiddhānta* and *tantrāntarasiddhānta*.¹⁰⁴

The Contents of the *Saṃhita*-s¹⁰⁵

According to *Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*, core of the theological discussion of *Saṃhitā*-s revolves around; 1) Essential Nature of God¹⁰⁶ 2)

His six supreme qualities (*ṣāḍguṇya*)¹⁰⁷ 3) The four *vyūha*-s 4) Creation, preservation and destruction of worlds¹⁰⁸ 5) Sub *vyūha*-s¹⁰⁹ 6) The *vibhava*-s¹¹⁰ and secondary manifestation 7) Essential form of *Lakṣmī* and 8) Essential form of *Jīvātman*.

The *Vaikhānasa* Cult

The term *Vaikhānasa* denotes hermits in Vedic literature. *Dharmaśāstra*-s consider *Vaikhānasa*-s along with *vāḷakhilya*-s and *phena*-s as hermits (*vānaprastha*), those who have entered third stage of life. The *Vaikhānasa*-s perceive themselves as belonging to *Vaikhānasa śākhā* of *Yajurveda* that is one of the three *śākhā*-s of the same, the other two being *taittirīyaka* and *vājasaneyaka*. Two medieval *Vaikhānasa* texts namely *Ānandasamhitā* and *Ādisamhitā* explicitly express their affiliation with *aukhyasākhā* of *Yajurveda*. The principal texts of the *Vaikhānasa*-s are the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* and *Vaikhānasaśrautasūtra* (later than fourth century), both are believed to have written by the sage Vikhanas. He is well known as an author of *Dharma* and *Gṛhya* section of Vedic literature. His authority in several Vedic rites is evidenced from the citations made by the *Dharmasūtra*-s of Bauddhāyana (II.6.16), *Gṛhyasūtra*-s of Agniveśa (II.6.5) and Bauddhāyana (II.9.17), *Śrautasūtra*-s of Bauddhāyana (II.24.3) and the *Śrautasūtra*-s of Hiraṇyakeśin (XIX.3.14).¹¹¹

But the *Vaikhānasaśrautasūtra* does not mention Vikhanas as its author while the *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra* do, but at the extreme end of two chapters (9.5; 10.15).¹¹² The former consists not only of *gṛhya* (domestic rites) and *dharma* (rules of conduct) parts but it also deals with three specific features: (i) omnipresence of devotion to Nārāyaṇa-viṣṇu, (ii) the importance given to image worship (the installation rituals and daily worship of Viṣṇu's image at home, in a temple or in a sacrificial ground) and (iii) lengthy prescriptions of hermitic and ascetic practices.¹¹³ Its importance lies in being the only text of its kind elaborating on the yogic practices to be followed by hermits who have entered fourth stage of life. The four stages of life are of a vedic student, house-holder, hermit and renouncer-which is reserved only for Brahmins.¹¹⁴

Classifications of the *Vaikhānasa* Literature

Other than these two texts (i.e., *Vaikhānasaśrautasūtra* and *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra*) Vikhanas is not known to have written any other works of same nature. Generally known *Vaikhānasasaṃhitā*-s are later compositions primarily by his four disciples namely Atri, Kaśyapa, Bhṛgu and Marīci and sometimes tradition attributes Aṅgiras also as the author of medieval *Vaikhānasa* corpus.¹¹⁵ Generally the works written by these four are known as *tantra*-s, *kāṇḍa*-s, *adhikāra*-s and *saṃhitā*-s

respectively. The works attributed to Atri are *Pūrvatantra*, *Ātreyantra* / *Mahāsaṃhitā*, *Viṣṇutantra* and *Uttaratantra*. Though *Satyakāṇḍa*, *Tarkakāṇḍa* / *Karmakāṇḍa*, *Jñānakāṇḍa*, *Santānakāṇḍa* and *Kāśyapa-kāṇḍa* are said to be written by Kāśyapa the *Jñānakāṇḍa* is the only work available today. The Bhṛḡu's compositions are *Khilādhikāra*, *Purādhikāra* / *tantra*, *Mānādhikāra* / *Arcanādhikāra*, *Varṇādhikāra*, *Niruktādhikāra*, *Prakīrṇādhikāra*, *Yajñādhikāra*, *Vāsādhikāra*, *Kriyādhikāra*, *Citrādhikāra*, *Pratigṛhyādhikāra*, *Khilatantra* and *Uttaratantra*. The works of Marīcī are *Jayasamhitā*, *Ānandasamhitā*, *Samjñānasamhitā*, *Vīrasamhitā*, *Vijayasamhitā*, *Vijitasamhitā*, *Vimalasamhitā* and *Jñānasamhitā*. Among these *Ānandasamhitā* is the only work available today. The entire list and classification of *Vaikhānasasamhitā*-s can be found enumerated in the four texts namely *Vimānārcanakalpa*, *Ānandasamhitā*, *Yajñādhikāra* and *Samūrtārcādhikaraṇa*.¹¹⁶

These fundamental texts of the *Vaikhānasa* tradition are believed to have composed between ninth and thirteenth centuries A.D. The major difference between the *Vaikhānasasmārtsūtra* and later *Samhita*-s is the former is primarily concerned with ascetic practices despite of its preference for image worship. But latter *Samhita*-s are less bothered about

the ascetic practices instead they emphasize on the importance of temple rituals and priest-hood.

Just like the *Pāñcarātrin-s*, *Vaikhānasa-s* also postulate about the five-fold manifestation of Vishnu but it contrasts with the *vyūha* theory of the latter in several respects. They are *Viṣṇu* (the all-pervading one and the central figure, the original and highest of them), *Puruṣa* (god as the principle of life), *Satya* (god as static and beginningless existence), *Acyuta* (god, the changeless one), and *Aniruddha* (god as the one who cannot be limited or reduced).¹¹⁷ These five forms of manifestations equated with the five-fold fire of vedic sacrificial tradition.

As in the other tantric traditions, initiation is the pre-requisite to priesthood and it is done during the eighth month of pregnancy (*garbhadīkṣā*). The *Vaikhānasasmārtasūtra's* account of initiation starts from the time of observance of the *Śīmantonayana* (tracing the furrow in the hair of a women in the eighth month of her pregnancy) which is followed by offering rice cooked in milk to the god *Viṣṇu*. After the offering is made, it is given to the pregnant woman. By taking the rice in it is believed that the fetus is initiated (*garbhadīkṣā*) into the cult. The observance of this unique form of initiation makes *Vaikhānasa-s* different

from *Pāñcarātrin*-s. But it is observed that relatively early *Vaikhānasa* texts do not refer to *garbhadīkṣā* at all.¹¹⁸

Notably the productions liturgical texts continued even after composition of fundamental *Samhitā*-s. Traditionalists of modern era also have attempted to extend the cultic teachings and practices through the composition of ritual manuals or commentarial works. But they do not enjoin the status of traditional *Samhitā*-s, but still are held important. Of these later works include the commentary on the *Vaikhānasadharmasūtra* by Nṛsiṃha Vājapeyin (post dates 14th century A.D.) and his own manual on image worship *Śrīmadbhagavadarcanaprakaraṇa*. The latter has received an extensive commentary called *Arcanānavanīta* by Keśavācārya. He is also known to have written two handbooks on public worship namely *Sarvapratiṣṭhāvidhidarpaṇa* and *Brahmotsavānukramaṇikā* and a handbook on domestic rituals viz., *Vaikhānasa-gr̥hyasūtradarpaṇa*.¹¹⁹

The other important author falls in this line of tradition is Bhaṭṭabhāskara, whose commentary on *Vaikhānasamantrapraśna* is held very important by traditionalists. The Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita (17-18 centuries A.D.) is another influential author who is attributed to have tried to establish a vedāntic *Vaikhānasa* school and also known to have

commented on the *Brahmasūtra*, known as *Lakṣmīviśiṣṭādvaitabhāṣya*. Throughout his commentary he seemed holding aloft the principle that image worship is the primary means to liberation. The works to his credit are a commentary on *Paramātmika* (a collection of gnomic *mantra*-s that forms the chapter of the *Vaikhānasamantrapraśna*), commentary on *Vaikhānasaśrautasūtra*, *Tithinirṇayakārikā* (an astrological treatise), and *Vaikhānasamahimāmañjarī* (a eulogy of the *Vaikhānasa* tradition).

It is a remarkable point that a Keralite, Sundararāja (1841-1905 A.D.) has been counted as a celebrated commentator by *Vaikhānasa* tradition. His works are *Uttamabrahmavidyāsāra*, commentaries on the works of Śrīnivāsadīkṣita viz., *Nigamacūdādarpaṇa*, commentary on *Lakṣmīviśiṣṭādvaitabhāṣya* and a biography of Śrīnivāsa Dīkṣita known as *Śrīnivāsadīkṣitacarita*.¹²⁰

The Buddhist *Tantra*

Tantrism as a cult was never remained confined to geographical boundaries of political India, but crossed all the boundaries of nationality. There are enough textual and scriptural evidences proving the evolution of tantrism into a common religion in South Asian countries. Just as all cults of tantrism share some commonalities, Tantric Buddhism shares the

common characteristic of *Śaivatantra*-s, particularly that of Śaivism of *Mantramārga*.¹²¹

Classification of the Buddhist Tantric Literature

Canons of Buddhist *tantra* are broadly divided into five namely,

1) *Kriyā* (*tantra*-s of action): e.g., *Anantamukhadhāraṇīsūtra*, *Amitābhadhyānasūtra*, *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* etc.

2) *Caryā* (*tantra*-s of observance): e.g., *Mahāvairocanasambodhi*.

3) *Yoga* (*tantra*-s of Yoga): e.g., *Tattvasaṅgraha-sūtra*, *Sarvathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*, *Paramādyā*, *Mahāvīrocānābhisambodhisūtra* etc.

4) *Yogottara* (*tantra*-s of higher Yoga): e.g., *Guhyasamāja*, *Advayasamatāvijaya* etc.

5) *Yogānuttara*¹²² (*tantra*-s of supreme Yoga)/ *Yoginī* *tantra*-s/ *Yoganiruttaratantra*: e.g., *Laghusaṃvara (mūlatantra)*, *Kālacakra*, *Mahāmāyā*, *Buddhakaṇṭhā*, *Catuṣpīṭha*, *Mahāmudrātilaka*, *Abhidhānottaratantra*, *Saṃpuṭotbhavatantra*, *Hevajra*, *Ḍākinīvajrapañjara*, *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, *Herukābhīdhāna*, *Rigyārāli*, *Vajrārāli*, *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, *Vajraḍāka*, *Guhyakośa*, *Vajrāmṛta*, *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Vajracatuṣpīṭha* etc.¹²³

This classification is presented in ascending order. The *tantra*-s belong to each of categories are noted for their exoteric or esoteric nature. The interesting aspect of this division is that unlike four-fold division of content of Śaiva *tantra*-s i.e., *vidyā*, *kriyā*, *caryā* and *yoga*, Buddhist *tantra*-s are categorized under each one of these divisions. But it is to be noted that there is no group of texts called *Vidyātantra*-s. This system of classification suggests that a text belongs to a particular division does not deal with topics of other division of canons.

Of the above classifications of *tantra*-s, the *Kriyātantra*-s (*mantrakalpa*) are mainly concerned with achieving worldly ends. They are not much bothered about philosophical speculations. One of the remarkable features of this division of *tantra*-s is they do not consider initiation as a necessary prerequisite to learn the scriptures and perform the rituals.¹²⁴

According to Sanderson a comparison can be made between Buddhist *Caryā* and *Yoga tantra*-s with that of Śaiva *Siddhānta* cult of *Sadāśiva*. Similarly, the scriptures of more esoteric and heteropractic traditions of higher *Yoga* and supreme *Yoga* can be compared with *tantra*-s of *Mantrapīṭha* and *Vidyāpīṭha*.¹²⁵ As further observed by him there

are also similarities between *Yoginītantra*-s and *tantra*-s of *Vidyāpīṭha* even in ritual procedures, style of observance, deities, mantras, mamaṇḍalas, ritual dress code, *Kāpālika* accoutrements, specialized terminology, secret gestures and secret jargons.¹²⁶

There are some beliefs and practices common to both Śaivism of *Mantramārga* and Tantric Buddhism. Wallis notes these common features are as;

1. Prerequisite of initiation and the importance of guru.
2. Initiates are to view the guru as an embodiment of deity.
3. Liberation means in a sense becoming the deity itself.
4. Possibility of an immersion into true nature at any moment.¹²⁷

The Tantric Cult of Bengal

Geographically, Bengal was another strong hold of tantric cults. Though it is the land known for antinomian and shamanic practices of gruesome aspects of Tantrism, it was here that the mild *Sahajīya* cult of Vaiṣṇavism had originated. It is the land where Kālī is worshipped in her

most ferocious form in temples and it spread later into adjacent regions like Assam and Orissa.

The *tantra*-s written in Bengal are divided into several categories. They are Buddhist, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava *tantra*-s and their date of composition extend from sixth to fifteenth centuries A.D.

The Buddhist *Tantra*-s of Bengal

Among the extant Buddhist *tantra*-s produced in Bengal in Sanskrit language *Kaulajñānanirṇaya*s considered to be very much important. The other works of the kind are *Tattvasaṅgraha* and *Tattvasiddhi* of Śāntarakṣita (eighth century A.D), *Cakrasambaramaṇḍalavidhitattvāvatāra* of Kumāravajra (10th century A.D.), *Herukasāadhanā* of Divākara-candra (11th century A.D), *Vajrayāna Sāadhanā* of Jetāri, and commentaries such as *Śrīsamputatantrarāja* called as *Āmnāyamañjarī*, *Buddhakaṭātantra* and *Vajrāvalināmamaṇḍalopākhyā* of Abhayākara-gupta (11th century A.D), *Viśeṣatattvaṭīkā* and *Devātiśayaṭīkā* of Prajñā-varman. And there are some minor works also.¹²⁸

The Śākta Tradition of Bengal: The *Daśamahāvidyā* Cult

The canonical divisions and their characteristics discussed so far are mostly originated in Kashmir and adjacent regions and later flourished

either there itself or other parts of the subcontinent. But the *Daśamahāvidyā* cult has a different history of origin and practice. It originated in Bengal and was predominantly associated with the tantric practices of this part of India. The ten goddesses are *Kālī*, *Tārā*, *Tripurasundarī*, *Bhuvaneśvarī*, *Bhairavī*, *Chinnamastā*, *Dhūmāvatī*, *Bagaḷāmukhī*, *Mātangi* and *Kamalā*.

The principal texts expounding the details of their rituals are *Śaktisaṃgama tantra*- which deals with only the ritual system of four goddesses *Kālī*, *Tārā*, *Sundarī* and *Chinnamastā* in the four divisions of the same text, *Śāktapramoda*, *Prāṇatoṣiṇī*, and *Āgamarahasya* of Sarayuprasada Dvivedi. This being solely an alternative ritual system had wide currency not only in Bengal and other parts of the country particularly Orissa and Assam.

The *Tantra*-s of Jainism

Just like the tantric cults of Buddhism, Jains also had developed their own systems of tantric ritual practices. The principal tantric texts are *Bhairavapadmāvatīkalpa*- which deals with the worship of *padmāvatīdevī*, who has a form similar to the *nāgayakṣī* worshipped in the *sarppakkāvu*-s of Kerala, *Jvālāmālīnīkalpa* etc.

This is just an over view of classifications of tantric canons. A detailed philosophical discussion of each school is not attempted here owing to the fact that the main intention is to give a general view of extend of tantric canons and their divisions. It is necessary to have this as a general background for further discussion on rituals.

Notes

- ¹ There are several meanings ascribed to the term. See the Sanskrit *Kośa*-s viz., *Śabdakalapadruma*, *Vācaspatya*, *Amarakośa*, *Medinīkośa* and *Nyāyakośa* (pp.318-19) for diverse meanings. Also see P.V. Kane's *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol.III, pp.1031-32. But nowhere other than in Tantric scriptures will one find it to have employed employed to refer to text of a tantric cult.
- ² Andre Padoux observes that the tantrism is " a category of discourse in the west" and to use it in a fashionable jargon "it is an etic, not an emic entity." See *What Do We Mean by Tantrism, The Roots of Tantra*, p. 17.
- ³ The first literary evidence for it can be seen in Kulluka Bhaṭṭa's exegesis to *Manusmṛti* wherein he says Śruti consists of two streams 'vaidikī' and 'tāntrikī'. (*śrutiśca dvividhā tāntrikī vaidikī ca*) see E. V. Rāman Nampūtiri's introduction to *Tantrasamuccaya* for how certain authors had distinguished these two streams from each other.
- ⁴ *The Roots of Tantra*, p. 17.
- ⁵ Sir John Woodroffe alias Arthur Avalon through his pioneering works projected *tantra* as a *Veda*-congruent spiritual tradition whereas, Agehananda Bharati tried to highlight anti-vedic and anti-brahmanic tendency of *tantra*. see Annaette Wilke, *Recoding the Natural and Animating the Imaginary: Kaula Body-practices in the Paraśurāmakalpasūtra, Ritual Transfers, and the Politics of Representation*, pp. 23-4.
- ⁶ *Buddhism and the issue of Co-functionality with Śaivism in the Early Medieval Period*, p.16.
- ⁷ *The Śaiva Traditions, The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, p.203.
- ⁸ Alexis Sanderson has observed that the Śaiva literature seem to have been classified into three ways: (1) into *Saiddhāntikatantra*-s on the one hand and the *Mantrapīṭha* and *Vidyāpīṭha* divisions of the *Bhairava* stream (*bhairavasrotaḥ*) on the other, (2) into *Tantra*-s of *Saiddhāntika* (*Ūrdhva*), *Vāma* and *Dakṣiṇa* streams, and (3) into *Saiddhāntika Tantra*-s and *Bhairava Tantra*-s. see *History Through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pāñcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginī Tantras*, p.19; Vrajavallabha Dvivedi demonstrates various ways of classifying Śaiva *tantra*-s based on the Śaiva

sources themselves. One of such classifications follow dividing them into *Srotovibhāga*, *Pīṭhavibhāga* and *Amnāyavibhāga*. In the first division there are two sub-divisions viz., *Trisrota- vāma*, *Dakṣiṇa* and *Siddhānta*-(this is similar to number two in Sanderson's list) and *Pañcasrota*- this constitutes the *tantra*-s that came out of five face of Sadāśiva. They are *Siddhānta* (Upper face), *Gāruḍa* (Eastern face), *Vāma* (Northern face), *Bhūta* (Western face) and *Bhairava* (Southern face). According to this system the *Siddhāntāgama*-s emanated from the upper face. But *Ajītāgama* speaks slight differently as the 28 *Āgama*-s came out of Sadāśiva's five faces, not from a particular face. In the *pīṭha* system of classification the texts are divided as belonging into *Vidyāpīṭha*, *Mantrapīṭha*, *Mudrāpīṭha* and *Maṇḍalapīṭha*. Regarding the *Amnāya* classification textual sources differ considerably as there are four, five and six divisions. See V.V Dvivedi's *Upodghāta* (introduction to *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇavaḥ*), pp.53-59.

⁹ See Mark S.D. Dyczkowski, *The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition*, pp.16-19.

¹⁰ See Sanderson, *Lākulas*, p.156.

*śṛṇvantu ṛṣayassarve pañcadhā yat prakīrtitam /
laukikaṃ vaidikaṃ caiva tathādhyātmikameva ca //
atimārgaṇṇa mantrākhyam* [. . .]. The same system of classification is seen in *Mrgendra*, *Pauṣkarapārameśvara*, *Svacchanda* and *Jayadrathayāmala*.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.157.

¹² *ādhyātmikaṃ sāmṁkhyayogādīpratipādita prakṛtipuruṣavivekajñāna-sarvavṛttinirodhajñānikaṃ / ibid.*, p.159.

¹³ *Pāśupata*, *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, pp.458-59.

¹⁴ To know more about the characteristic features of Kāpālīka's cult see Judit Torzok, *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, pp.355-61; *The Canons of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition*, pp.26-31.

¹⁵ See Mark, *op. cit.*, pp.20-21.

¹⁶ In addition to these Madhva's *Sarvadarśanasamṁgraha*, *Liṅgapurāṇa*, *Pāmpāmāhātmya*- a *Purāṇa* of late origin- etc. also describe the principal beliefs and practices of the cult. See Peter Bisschop and Arlo Griffiths, *The Pāśupata Obsrvance (Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa 40)*, pp. 318-19.

¹⁷ Eight of these *pramāṇa* texts referred to in *Svacchandatantra* and *Niśvāsattvasaṃhitā* are 1. *Pañcārthapramāṇa* 2. *Guhya* or *Śivaguhyā* 3. *Rudrāṅkuśa* 4. *Hṛdaya* 5. *Vyūha* 6. *Lakṣaṇa* 7. *Ākarṣa* and 8. *Ādarśa*. These are in fact the names eight Rudras' who said to have propagated these treatises (ete *rudrā etannāmakapāśupataśāstrāvatārakāḥ*) see Sanderson, *Lākulas*, p. 171.

¹⁸ *evam suduḥkhāntaḥ kāryaṃ kāraṇaṃ yogo vidhiriti pañcaiva padārtha samāsataḥ upadiṣṭāḥ /*

Pāśupata Sūtras With Pañcārthabhāṣya of Kaundinya, p.6.

¹⁹ *Pāśupatas*, p.459.

²⁰ *Lākulas*, p. 158.

²¹ See *Lākulas* p. 147 for the differences between *Atimārga* and *Mantramārga*.

²² Sanderson, EPHE-Lectures-p.5.

²³ See Mark, notes 221, p.152.

na śrutam gāruḍam kiñcit sadyaḥ pratyayakāraṇam /

taṃ ācakṣhasva suraśreṣṭha mama bhaktaśca śaṅkara //

lakṣaṇam nāgajātīnām garbhotpattimaśeṣataḥ /

rūpakam sarvanāgānām vyantaram ca jatakam //

grahaykṣhapiśācānām sākinīnām ca lakṣaṇam /

bālagrahāśca ye krūrāḥ pīdyante nitya nirghṛṇaḥ // (*Bṛhatsūcīpatra tantra*, vol. I, p.96)

²⁴ Mark notes "He stands (or sits?) on a lotus of four petals. On the eastern petal is seated *Jayā*, on the southern *Jayeśvarī*, on the northern *Jitā*, while *Parājītā* in the west. They are sisters of *Tumburu* and all play *Vīṇās*. *Tumburu*'s association with music- particularly the *Vīṇā*- is also brought out by a number of Goddesses amongst the many that surround Him who are said to be skilled in playing this instrument." Here the name of four Goddesses appears to be slightly different. See Mark, notes to part one, pp.149-151 for the further details on the visualization of *Tumburu*.

²⁵ Sanderson, *Introduction to Śaivism* (handout), p.3.

²⁶ See Mark, Notes to part one, p.151.

xxxxsiddhyartham uktaṃ tad avatārakaḥ /

nayasūtrādibhedena vāmaṃ vāmāt vinirgatam // (*Pūrva Kāmikāgama*, 1/25)

- ²⁷ *Abhinavagupta* speaks of this classification in the context of glorifying the supremacy of *Mālinīvijayottara* as it teaches the essence of *Trika*.
daśāṣṭādaśavasvaṣṭabhinnam yacchāsanam vibhoḥ /
tatsāram trikaśāstram hi tatsāram mālinīmatam // 1.18
- ²⁸ See *Kiraṇa- catuṣpādayutānyeva, Mṛgendrāgama, Vidyāpāda, 2, 2. tripadārtham catuṣpādam mahātantram jagadpatiḥ /sūtrenaikena saṅgrhya., Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, Kriyāpāda, 10, 2: catuṣpadārtha kuśalam, Helene Brunner, The Four Pādas of Śaivāgamas, The Journal of Oriental Research, Madras (Vols. LVI-LXII), fn.21, p.266.*
- ²⁹ The numbers of *padārtha*-s vary ranging from three to six according to some of the *Āgama*-s. The three categories (*tripadārtha*-s) are *pati* (Śiva), *paśu* (fettered soul) and *pāśa* (bondages) and they are ontologically distinct from each other. The Śiva does five acts (*pañcakṛtya*) viz., *sṛṣṭi* (creation), *sthiti* (maintenance), *saṃhāra* (re-absorption), *rodha/nirodha*, *tirobhāva/saṃrakṣaṇa* (concealment) and *anugraha* (grace) at his will. The last two actions are executed in favor of fettered souls by which he restrains the eternal nature of souls to limited beings and grant them liberation after the impurities are completely stripped of. The *paśu* is the technical term for an individual who is also infinite, not created, and possess all the attributes of Śiva at his core. The only difference is that *paśu*-s are totally unaware of their omnipotence and omnipresence due to their everlasting association with the impurities.
ato anādimālabandhāt kāraṇātte pumāṃso anīśvaraḥ, anabhiviyaktajñatva-kartṛtva bala malanivṛttameva tadabhiviyakteḥ, ibid, p.15.
- ³⁰ The *Śaivasiddhānta* postulates about two distinct processes of creation viz., pure and impure. In the pure creation (consists of five principles Śiva, Śakti, Sadāsiva, Īśvara and Śuddhavidyā) Śiva is the efficient cause (*nimittakāraṇa*) whereas, the *bindu* acts as the material cause (*upādānakāraṇa*). While in the creation of impure principles (consists of rest of the thirty-one principles beginning with *māyā* up to *pṛthivī*) Ananta is the efficient cause and *māyā*- Unlike the *māyā* of vedantins, *Śaivasiddhāntins'* view *māyā* as single, eternal, and unconscious source of worlds and everything in them, including the bodies and faculties of each soul- becomes the material cause. See Sanderson, *The Doctrine of Mālinīvijayottara*, p.282.

The creation of the pure universe proceeds from Śiva with the emergence of seventy crores of *mantra*-s. There are eight divinities, considered to be lords of *mantra*-s known as *vidyeśvara*-s with Ananta is their chief. Subsequently he (Śiva) creates *vīrabhadra*, chief of 100 *Rudra*-s, *Brahman*, *Viṣṇu* etc. In the creation of impure universe Śiva gets it done through an intermediary, Ananta. He agitates *māyā* in order to initiate the process of creation and as a result *kalā*, *vidyā* and *rāga* evolve. From the *rāga* evolves the *pradhāna* or *avyakta* and rest of the creation process is similar to that of *Sāṃkhya*. The sole purpose of creating the world is to give an opportunity to those souls who are not experienced the fruits of their past actions to get released from the bonds of *karma*. It is Śiva who alone capable of releasing souls and when he feels that a soul is ripen enough to be released, he grants his omniscience and omnipotence. In the case of those souls who are born as human beings, Śiva grants liberation through the ritual of initiation (*dīkṣā*) which he accomplishes through a human officiant (*ācārya*). The *Saiddhāntika*-s attach very much importance to ritual because the *pāśa*- the unique characteristic feature of *pāśa* as presented by the *Āgama*-s is it is a material (*dravya*), not an abstract concept-can be removed by a corresponding action (*kriyā* / *vyāpārah*) alone. This does not happen otherwise, i.e., by mere knowledge of reality. That is why the initiation is so important as far as *Śaivasiddhāntin*-s are concerned. It is the impurity (*mala*) causes soul to experience the influential powers of products of *māyā* viz., *vidyā* (limited knowledge), *kalā* (restricted action), *niyatīḥ* (the effects of past actions) and *kālaḥ* (limited time). When a soul is caught under the influence of *māyā*, it is subjected to the cycle of several births and re-births to experience the fruit of actions carried out in previous lives.

There are four fetters (*pāśa*-s) restraining a soul from its unlimited freedom. The four *pāśa*-s are impurity, (*mala/pravṛttiḥ*), *māyā* / *granthipāśaḥ*, past actions (*karma*) and power of Śiva's will which holds souls to subject these three (*rodhaśaktiḥ* / *īśabalam*). The *mala* is of three kinds viz., *āṇava*, *māyīya* and *kārma*. And those who are bound by *mala*-s are classified in to three. They are 1) *vijñānakalā*-s: those who are restricted by only the powers *mala*, 2) *praḷayākala*-s: those who are being affected by *mala* and *kārman*, and 3) *sakala*-s: those who are totally affected by *mala*, *karma* and *māyā*. Śiva

liberates the souls at his free will by weakening the powers of impurity that results in the souls to desire for shunning worldly pleasures and pains and strives to find an officiant to get initiated. This attitude and commitment are said to be the perfect signs of *śaktipāta* (the descent of power). Then the officiant proceeds by performing subsequent rituals of initiation that enable the candidate to perform rituals prescribed in the *Āgama*-s and learn the scriptures. These philosophical postulations are well reflected and inextricably interwoven in rituals.

31 As mentioned earlier the *Siddhāntāgama*-s hold a dualistic view. Dualism is in the sense that *Jīva* can never become Śiva but equal to him (*Śivasamatā*) (*śivasamatvameveha mokṣo na tu tallayaḥ; Tattvatryanirṇayavṛtti* of *Bhaṭṭarāmakaṇṭha*, p.12.) and can enjoin the powers namely, omnipotence and omniscience. This is too possible only after death. The initiation is the necessary precondition to perform the rituals and learn the concerned scriptures. Moreover, the initiation is said to be the only means to be undergone by a practitioner in order to be eligible for attaining the highest reality viz., *Śivasamatā*.

32 Helene Brunner, *The Place of Yoga in Śaivāgamas*, Pandit N.R. Bhatt *Facilitation Volume*, p.439.

33 Helene Brunner, *Four Pādas of Śaivāgamas*, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-65.

34 *ibid.*, p.265.

35 Two *Paddhati* texts following the quadri-partition are *Siddhāntasāravalī* of Trilocana (13th century A.D.) and *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati* of Īśānaśivagurudeva (*Sāmānya, Mantra, Kriyā* and *Yoga*). *ibid.*, p.276.

36 See Helene Brunner, *The Place of Yoga in Śaivāgamas* pp. 426-31; and also Goodall's introduction to *Parākhyātantra*.

37 *Summary of Tantirc Śaivism*, p.2.

38 *Parākhyātantra*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

39 *ibid.*, p.xxvii.

40 See the third volume of *Rauravāgama* edited by N.R. Bhatt. There he provides the entire list of *Upāgama*-s.

41 *Earliest Śaiva Guides to Ritual*, p.2.

42 *durvāsāḥ piṅgalaścaiva ugrajyatotiḥ subodhakaḥ /*
śrīkaṇṭho viṣṇaukaṇṭhaśca vidyākaṇṭhastathaiva ca //
rāmakaṇṭho jñānaśiva jñānaśaṅkara eva ca /

somaśaṃbhur brahmaśaṃbhustrilocanaśivastathā //
aghoraśiva evātha prasādaśiva eva ca /
rāmanāthaśivaścaivam īśānaśiva eva ca //
vāruṇākhyā śivaścaiva tadāsācāryapuṅgavaḥ /
etaiḥ divyaiḥ śivācāryaiḥ paddatiḥ paribhāṣitā //

43 His other known *Saiddhāntika* works are philosophical commentaries on Bhojadeva's (Parāmāra king of 11th century A.D.) *Tattvaparakāśa*, Rāmakaṇṭha-II's *Nādakārikā*, Śrīkaṇṭha's *Ratnatraya* and the four works of Sadyojyotis viz., *Tattvasaṅgraha*, *Tattvatrayanirṇaya* and *Bhogakārikāca*; and *Pañcāvaraṇastava*. See Richard H. Davis, *Aghoraśiva's Background*, *The Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, p. 367.

44 This is not his original but a second name given at the time of initiation. He is referred to by Kashmirian exegetes by other names viz., *Kheṭakanandana* by Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha, *Kheṭakabāla* by Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha and *Kheṭapala* by Jayaratha. See Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat, *The Philosophy of Sadyojyoti*, p.20.

45 Sanderson, *The Date of Sadyojyoti*, p.9.

46 *ibid.*, p.3.

47 Reference to this text is made by T. Ganesan in *Concept of Mukti and Its Means in Śaivasiddhānta*, fn. 9, p. 5.

48 T. Ganesan, *Śaivasiddhānta*, pp.522-23.

49 He has been hailed by traditionalists as *Sakalāgamapaṇḍita*. T. Ganesan, *Sanskrit and Tamil for Śaivism*, p.3

50 It is further postulated in *Civaññāpōtam* that Śiva being embodied as preceptor (*ācārya*) keeps the self at his holy feet by removing the constraining *mala*. According to Śivāgrayogi it is Śiva who kindles the innate *Śivānanda* of the Self after removing all the fetters and pouring the rain of his bliss and merging the Self into himself. Nigamajñāna adds further that the bliss of the liberated self and Śiva are of different nature.

With respect to means capable of leading to liberation the exegetes of principal *Siddhāntāgama*-s namely, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha, Rāmakaṇṭha and Aghoraśiva had held the view that the initiation is the only way out. But the followers of *Śivajñānabodha* School believe that it is the dawn of *Jñāna* - the undifferentiated unity with Śiva- leads the soul to liberation. The liberation according to Śivāgrayogin is the manifestation of one's innate Śivahood

(*muktiḥ...malavidaraṇapūrvikā sivābhivyaktiḥ*). See T. Ganesan, *Concept of Mukti and Its Means in Saivasiddhānta*, for a detailed discussion on how liberation is held differently within the tradition of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta.

⁵¹ Mark observes that the texts- particularly *Netratantra* and *Brahmayāmala* which were written before ninth century- did not seem to be referring to a mode of division of *tantra*-s of Śaivism into five currents (*srotas*). Later texts divide *tantra*-s into *Vāma*, *Siddhānta* and *Bhairava*. The *Siddhānta tantra*-s are further divided into *Śivabheda*-s and *Rudrabheda*-s. The *Bhairava tantra*-s are further categorized into *Mantrapīṭha* and *Vidyāpīṭha*. The *Netratantra* also presents same three- fold division. The presiding deities in these classifications of *tantra*-s are said to be *Tumburu*, *Bhairava* and *Sadāśiva*. It further mentions about the scriptures that belong to *Dakṣiṇasrotaḥ* (i.e., *Bhairava tantra*-s) as forming "the division into eight times eight" (*aṣṭāṣṭakavibhāga*) also known as '*Bhairavāṣṭaka*'. See Shaman Hatley, *The Brahmayāmalatantra and Early Śaiva Cult of Yoginīs*, p. 216 and 266. also *The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition*, to know the slight variation in the order and name of eight *Bhairava*-s and the corresponding *tantra*-s known by their names according to the list of *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇa-sārasamuccaya*, *Śrīkaṇṭhīyasamhitā*, *Jayadrathayāmala* and *Brahmayāmala*. pp. 44-46.

⁵² Here the *pīṭha* denotes 'a collection' of scriptures.
śrīmadānandaśāstrāḍau proktaṃ bhagavatā kila /
samūhaḥ pīṭhaṃ etaccadvidhā dakṣiṇavāmataḥ /
mantra vidyeti . . . (T.Ā. 37/18).

⁵³ *iha vidyāmantramudrāmaṇḍalātmatayā catuṣpīṭhaṃ tāvacchāstram* (T.Ā, Vol. XIb), p.114. Mark observes that the order is slightly different in *Svacchandatantra*.

mudrā maṇḍalapīṭhaṃ tu mantrapīṭhaṃ tathaiva ca /
vidyāpīṭhaṃ tathaiveha catuṣpīṭhā tu samhitā // Vol. I, p.10.

⁵⁴ He is visualized as "white, five faced (the embodiment of the five *brahmamantra*-s) and eighteen armed. He is worshiped with his identical consort *Aghoreśvarī*, surrounded by eight lesser *Bhairava*-s within a circular enclosure of cremation grounds. He stands upon the prostrate corpse of

Sadāśiva, the now transcended Śiva-from worshipped in the *Śaivasiddhānta*. Alexis Sanderson, *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, p.6.

55 See Mark, Appendix C. pp.107-110. for more information on details of these *tantra*-s.

56 *svacchandabhairavascaṇḍaḥ krodha unmattabhairavaḥ /*
granthāntarāṇi catvāri mantrapīṭhaṃ varānane //I.4-7//

57 See Sanderson, *History Through Textual Criticism*, fn. 24, p.20.

58 *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, p.670.

59 *ibid.*

60 *The Śaiva Age- The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period*, p. 49.

61 *dampatyayogataḥ pūjā yāmaleti nigadyate*. Cited from *Bramayāmala* (I. xxxiii. 25b) by Shaman Hatley, see fn., p. 238; at another place *Brahmayāmala* explains clearly why it is a *yāmala* as it encompasses within itself a variety of oppositions (*yāmala*): those of liberation and supernatural attainment (*mukti and bhukti*); ritual and doctrine (*kriyā and jñāna*); and teachings of both 'pure' and 'impure' way, as well as the 'mixed' and 'unmixed' ritual paths. *ibid.*, p. 242.

62 Shaman Hatley, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

63 *ibid.* 237.

64 The name and numbers of *yāmala*-s slightly vary in accordance with scriptural sources. For example, *Brahmayāmala* (XXXVIII. 25cd-27ab) provides the list of eight of them;

rudrayāmalaṃ anyāñca tathā vai skandayāmalam /

brahmayāmalaṃ caiva viṣṇuyāmalamameva ca //

yamayāmalaṃ cānyaṃ vāyuyāmalamameva ca /

kubera yāmalaṃ caiva indrayāmalamameva ca //. cited by Hatley in footnote 10, p. 240; see also Mark, pp. 114-19.

65 *ibid.*, p.239.

66 For better understanding of distinguishing feature of *Kaulism* Hatley's observation (following the lead of Sanderson) will be worth quoting. "In the domain of ritual the *Kaula* tradition attenuated the mortuary or *Kāpālīka* dimension of the *Vidyāpīṭha*, shifting the primary locus of ritual from the cremation ground to the body and consciousness itself. This shift involved

internalization and simplification of ritual processes, increasingly interiorized conceptions of divine agencies, disavowal of the outer trappings of the *Kāpālīka* ascetic, emphasis on ecstatic experience in erotic ritual, development of comparatively sophisticated systems of *Yoga*. The *Kaula* tradition hence transforms the *Vidyāpīṭha* emphasis on the potency of 'impure' ritual substances, the cult of spirits and visionary, transactional encounters with deities, although these dimensions persist to some degree. In addition, on the social level; the *Kaula* opened up new possibilities for the engagement of practitioners maintaining conventional social identities and kinship relations." *op.cit.*, pp.156-57.

⁶⁷ Sanderson observes that three Goddesses *Parā*, *Parāparā* and *Aparā* who were worshiped externally on red cloth upon the ground, in circle filled with vermilion powder and enclosed with a black border, on a coconut substituted for a human skull, a vessel filled with wine or other alcohol, or on a *maṇḍala* later on started to be worshipped within vital energy (*prāṇa*) or in thought (*saṃvidi pūjā*). In the ritual system of external worship the *Kaula Trika* also emphasized on spontaneity and intensity of immersion (*tanmayībhāva*, *saṃāveśa*) over elaborate ritual. *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, pp.679-81.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.11.

⁶⁹ *Kiss of the Yoginī*, p.37.

⁷⁰ It is an unpublished thesis submitted to the University of Pennsylvania in 2007.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp.11-17.

⁷² Alexis Sanderson observes that "the kaula form of the cult of the three goddesses of the trident was well established among the Kashmir by the beginning of the ninth century; and our first detailed exegesis of Kashmiri Trika, at the end of the tenth century, shows that there had long existed a hierarchical distinction between the lower, Tantric form of the cult (*tantra-prakriyā*) and the new Kaula tradition". See *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, p.681.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p.687.

⁷⁴ Sanderson points out two more peculiarities viz., the scriptures of this tradition consider themselves above *Vidyāpīṭha* and external worship is looked upon as inferior to mental worship. One more noteworthy point is unlike in the other

tantra-s of *Vidyāpīṭha*, the Goddess teaches the Bhirava here in the texts of this tradition. *ibid.*, p.684.

75 *Manthānabhairavatantra*, Vol.II, p.96.

76 *trikoṇamanākhyātam*. P.64.

77 *ibid.*, Vol.III, p.1.

78 *madhumatyā mahādevyā stādādmyaṃ kādisaṅjñakam /*
kālīmataṃ tu mālinyā stādātmyaṃ tāntrikā viduḥ // Śrīvidyārṇavatanaṃ, I.
4.//

79 *saṃpradāyo hi nānyo'sti loke śrīśaṅkarād bahiḥ /*
kādiśaktimate tantraṃ tantrarājaṃ sudurlabham // ibid., I. 98 //

māṭṛkārṇavaśaṅjñam tu tripurārṇavaśaṅjñakam /
yoginīhṛdayaṃ caiva khyātaṃ grantha catuṣṭayam // 99//

80 *Tantra Illuminated-the Philosophy, History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition*, pp.284-85.

81 There is a difference of opinion regarding the authorship. Kṣemarāja upholds the view that it was authored by Vasugupta himself whereas, Utpalavaiṣṇava believed that it was written by Kallaṭa. see K.C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta – An Historical and Philosophical Study*, pp.154-55; Kamalakar Misra, *Kashmir Śaivism- the Central Philosophy of Tantrism*, introduction , pp.60-61.

82 See K.C. Pandey, *Abhinavagupta*, p. 156.

83 He is also said to have written a *vivṛti* on the same and a commentary on *Parātriṃśikā* called *Parātriṃśikāvivṛti*, *ibid.*, p.162.

84 *ibid.*, p. 289.

85 *ibid.*, p.163-64.; Kamalakar Misra, p.62.

86 See Gerard Colas, *History of Vaiṣṇava Traditions*, pp.230-33 for inscriptional evidences of the presence of sect in early period.

87 Dvivedi speaks of three divisions of scriptures of Vaiṣṇavism by including the *Bhāgavata* as the third one. There he lists the names of eight *Bhāgavata* Texts. See *Vaiṣṇavāgamavimarśaḥ*, p. 15.

88 Sanderson notes "*Vaiṣṇavism* gained ground again only towards the end of our period, and in subsequent centuries. Before that happened, while it remained in the shadow of *Śaivism*, it gave rise to a new literature of scriptural texts known collectively as the *Pāñcarātra*, that was probably composed in an around Kashmir. A form of *Vaiṣṇavism* bearing this name is already

mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. It is very probable, therefore, that it was in existence well before the *Śaiva Mantramārga*. "Śaiva Age, p.61.

89 Mitsunori Matsubara, *Pāñcarātra Saṃhitās and Early Vaiṣṇava Theology*, Introduction, p.2.

90 Dvivedi, *op. cit.*, p.24.

91 See Mitsunori Matsubara, pp.7-11; F.O. Schrader, pp.27-29. for the extensive meaning of the word *Pāñcarātra*.

92 *rātram ca jñānavacanam jñānam pañcavidham smṛtam /*

tenedaṃ pāñcarātram hi pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ // Nāradapāñcarātra. 1.44 //

93 This does not find mention in *Lakṣmītantra* and *Sanatkumārasaṃhitā*. And *Svabhāva* is the term used in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* instead of *antaryāmin*. *ibid.*, p.29.

94 *Pāñcarātra*, *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Vol. III. P. 446.

95 see pp.6-12.

96 *sātvataṃ pauṣkaraṃ caiva jayākhyam tantramuttamam /*

ratnatrayamiti khyātam tadviśeṣa ihocyate // Jayākhyāsaṃhitā (JS). I. 80.

97 The ritual injunctions of these texts are practically applied in the three south Indian temples namely Melkote in Mysore, Srirangam and Kancipuram. Gonda. p.61.

98 *ibid.*, p.95.

99 Schrader notes that the texts mentioned him by name are *Jayākhyā (Sriṣṭaya / Jayā)*, *Haṃsapārameśvara*, *Vaiḥyasa* and *Śrīkālpara*. p.21.

100 Sanderson also makes the reference of the same texts as early ones. His list of early texts is as follows: *Svāyambhuvapāñcarātra*, *Devāmṛtapāñcarātra*, *Vāsudevakalpa* of the *Mahālakṣmīsaṃhitā*, *Jayottara*, *Jayākhyā*, *Sātvata* and *Pauṣkara*. He further states that "Now, of these, three, namely the *Jayottara* and *Jayākhyā*, and the *Sātvata*, are very unlikely to have been produced before the ninth century, that is to say, at a time when *Śaiva Mantramārga* had been flourishing under widespread royal patronage for at least two centuries and had been existence in some form by a time no later than the middle of the sixth and perhaps as early as the middle of the fifth. For all three focus on the worship of a form of Vāsudeva, called *Vaikuṇṭha* in the *Jayākhyā* and *Jayottara* and *Śaktyātman* or *Śaktīśa* in the *Sātvatasāṃhitā*, in which the principal anthropomorphic face is flanked by the faces of *Narasimha* and

Varāha, with a fourth face, that of the sage Kapila at the rear. "*The Śaiva Age*, p.62.

101 Scharder, p. 21, 110; Matsubara , p. 17.

102 pp.17- 33.

103 *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, Vol.I, Introduction, p.80.

104 *taccaturdhā sthitam śāstram ṛgādivadanekadhā /*

ekaikaṃ bhidyate tantraṃ śākhābhedenā bhūyasā //

prathamam mantrasiddhāntam dvitīyam cāgamāhvayam /

ṛtīyam tantrasiddhāntam turyam tantrāntaram bhavet // *Pāñcarātrarakṣā* , p. 9.

105 Sanderson points out that the *Pāñcarātra* corpus available today are "product of a thorough reformation in which Vaiṣṇavas followed the example of the already flourishing *Śaiva Mantramārga* in order to provide themselves with a substantially new ritual system that would enable them to compete more effectively with their rivals." *The Śaiva Age*, p. 61.

106 *trividhena prakāreṇa paramam brahma śāśvatam /*

ārādhayanti ye teṣāṃ rāgastiṣṭhati dūrataḥ // I.23 //

107 *śāṭṭṛya vigrahaṃ devaṃ bhāsvajjvalanatejasam /*

sarvataḥ pāṇipādam tat sarvatokṣi śiromukham // *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, .6. 25;

the six qualities are *jñāna* (omniscience), *aiśvarya* (qualities of lordship), *śakti* (potency), *bala* (Force), *vīrya* (virility) and *tejas* (brilliant energy).

108 According to the principles of *Pāñcarātra*, the creation of the universe proceeds through five different stages namely *para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *antaryāmin* and *arcā*. It is the Supreme Being, Puruṣa or Vāsudeva awakens his energy Śakti / Lakṣmī. The Śakti along with her two aspects that foster the process of creation namely, Kriyāśakti (force of acting) and *Bhūti* (force of becoming) flashes up as an aftermath of her awakening. Then the six qualities emerge in two pairs of which three of them are connected with Kriyāśakti and rest three is connected with Bhūti. The real process of creation starts with emergence of three *vyūha*-s namely Saṃkarṣaṇa (soul), Pradyumna (intellect) and Aniruddha (ego), of which each constitutes the six qualities but only two of them are said to be dominating at a time viz. *jñāna* and *bala*, *aiśvarya* and *vīrya*, *śakti* and *tejas*. (gonda p.65). All these processes commence from

Vāsudeva who is the fourth Vibhava, possess within the six qualities with equal dominance.

These four *vyūha*-s appear almost same in all *Pāñcarātra Āgama*-s except In *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*. According to it the four *vyūha*-s consist of Acyuta, Satya, Puruṣa and Ananta.(JS.IV.4-7)

109 From the each *vyūha* springs forth the three sub-*vyūha*-s (or *vyūhāntara*-s) named after the twelve epithets of Viṣṇu.

110 There are forty manifestations beginning with *Padmanābha*. see *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, Intro, pp.104-5. for the entire list; the early texts viz., *Jayākhyā*, *Ahīrbudhnya* and *Lakṣmī* do not deal with the *Vibhava*.

111 *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, intro. p.14.

112 Gerard Colas, *History of Vaiṣṇava Traditions*, pp.235-36; Brill's *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, p.590.

113 Brill, p.591; Blackwell, p. 236.

114 Brill, p.591.

115 Out of his nine disciples viz.,

kāśyapo atrir marīciśca vasiṣṭho āṅgirasas hyaham /

pulastyah pulahaścaiva kratuśca navasaṅkyakāḥ //

ete vikhanasaḥ śiṣyāḥ lokānugrahakāriṇaḥ / only four were known as the authors of *Samhita*-s.

116 Dvivedi, *Vaiṣṇavāgamavimarśaḥ*, p.59.

117 *Gonda*, p.150.

118 Brill, pp-595; Blackwell, p.244.

119 Brill, p.596.

120 *ibid.*

121 Sanderson observes that 'By the 8th century CE the Buddhists had accumulated a hierarchy of Tantric revelations roughly parallel in its organization and character to that of *Mantramārga*.' *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, p.678.

122 In another system of classification *Yogottaratantra*-s and *Yogānuttara tantra*-s are grouped together and designated as *Anuttaratantra*-s.

123 Sanderson, *Śaiva Age*, p. 157.

124 Cristopher Wallis, *Buddhism*, p.12.

125 "thus most of the material in the *Abhidhānottaratantra* and *Saṃpuṭodbhavantra* listing the characteristics by which Yoginīs of different

sorts may be recognized, and the sign language and syllabic codes with which they must be addressed (*chommā*), has been lifted with some Buddhist overwriting from such *Vidyāpīṭha* texts as the *Yoginīsamcāra* of the *Jayadrathayāmalatantra*, the *Picumata- Brahmayāmalatantra* and the *Tantrasadbhāva*." *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, p.679.

¹²⁶ Sanderson, *Vajrayāna —Origin and Function*, pp.94-5.

¹²⁷ *Buddhism and the Issue of Co-functionality with Śaivism in the Early Medieval Period*, pp.18-20.

¹²⁸ For a detailed discussion on these authors and tantras see S.C Banerji, *Tantra in Bengal- A Study in its Origin, Development and Influence*, pp.77-87.



Chapter Two

**TANTRIC RITUALS: THEIR GENERAL
CHARACTERISTICS**

Generally, the rituals are integral to cults of tantrism. The rituals and their significance in the life of a religious person are understood in accordance with traditional interpretations. At one level, they are conceived to be the practical means to the ultimate goal and to explore into different realms of religious experiences. These are said to be the higher purposes of tantric ritual performances. At another level, ritual is also seen as means to propitiate the deity or any supernatural forces to obtain the desired goals. The goals usually include not only of individual benefits but also of a common good.

In any cult of tantrism, rituals are the primary practical means that should be learned and practiced under supervision of an adept. The logical coherence of rituals can be understood to some extent from the texts themselves. But some texts do not provide the meanings in a plain and simple language. Then the text has to be taken as a whole and information lying scattered has to be pieced together to have a better understanding of rituals and their significance. Generally, it is commentators' job to make a text more coherent and meaningful and they often do this intelligently. But there are certain elements that need to be transmitted directly by the guru himself. When this transmission takes place a new window will be thrown open for the incumbent, through which he could see the vastness

and depth of wisdom.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to provide a general outline of tantric rituals, which includes characteristics and functions of rituals. The discussions largely revolve around basic principles of *Śaivasiddhānta* and *Pāñcarātra* traditions, since the philosophical background of Kerala *tantra* is deeply rooted in these two cults. Conceptual variations found in the other belief systems of tantrism are noted occasionally but not discussed in detail.

The Ritual Elements

There are several interconnected constituents that together make a ritual a complete whole. The five important elements of a ritual are i) the worshipper ii) ritual space iii) materials of worship iv) object of worship and v) ritual.

i. The Worshipper

The first element is worshipper it is he who intends to perform the ritual. Anyone can perform a ritual in the way he wants it but a ritual is often meant for an initiate in tantric lore. So a worshipper must be qualified to perform rituals and the qualification of a worshipper is decided by traditions. The first and foremost criterion is that the

worshipper should be initiated into any of tantric traditions. The initiation can be said in simple terms as a right-giving ritual ceremony by which one gets entry into a cult. The characteristics of tantric rituals of initiation are as given below.

The Initiation as a Cross-cultural Phenomenon

According to Mircea Elide, Romanian historian of religion, the initiation is "a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alternation in religious and social status of the person to be initiated."¹ It is held by the believers of primitive religions that after the ritual ceremony the novice is being transformed into a new man. For the initiate it is just like a rebirth. Every primitive society possesses a consistent body of mythical traditions. And all rituals including initiatory rituals are designed in accordance with it. After the initiation the novice is supposed to carry forth the customs and values of a society throughout his life.

Subsequently, Elide distinguishes three categories of initiation, which are common to all religions. The first category comprises of collective rituals that are obligatory for all members of a society. The other two categories of initiations are not obligatory for all members and performed individually or for a small group. The second category includes

the rites for entering a "secret society". A secret society consists either only of males or females in most cases. The third category of initiation is of mystical nature and it values personal experience above all practices. This form of initiation is sought either to acquire mystical powers or to be qualified to pursue mystical vocation i.e. the medicine man or shaman.² All these sort of practices were once current among primitive societies. Initiation is still present in myriad forms in modern religions as a standardized version of primitive rites. Even then the core belief behind such rites remains same.

The Initiation in the Tantric Traditions

It is only after receiving initiation one becomes an eligible candidate for learning and practicing the tantric texts and rituals respectively. After the initiation the initiate is treated as a member of particular group and he is expected to conform to the traditional values throughout his life.

The Rituals of Initiation

The rituals of initiation occupy a prominent place among the rituals prescribed in the tantric scriptures. Behind any ritual activity there is a corresponding cognitive exercise, which gives meaning to the activity.

The *ācārya* must be well versed in the philosophical concepts of ritual activities and their practical significance in a ritual. These together make the ritual of initiation more meaningful and powerful as well. It is to be noted that there are similarities between the rituals of initiation and installation. Therefore, it is necessary to know the technical aspects of rituals of initiation, particularly the one who sets out to perform rituals of installation. Notably, the rituals of initiation are more or less similar in all tantric cults alike. The characteristic features of rituals of initiation and meaning attributed to them by Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta traditions are discussed below.

The *Saiddhāntika* Initiation

Prior to the discussion of various methods of initiation, usually the characteristics of an ideal '*guru*' and '*śiṣya*' are described at the outset in detail in all scriptures. The *guru* is one who has undergone the *Śaiddhāntika* initiation and possesses commendable knowledge of tradition and its inner dynamics. He serves a channel for the transmission of tradition. While initiating disciple the *guru* becomes the Śiva himself and it is who initiates the disciple. It is postulated that Śiva alone can liberate the soul and generally he does this through a *ācārya*. Before starting the initiation rituals per se the *ācārya* must be convinced that the

disciple has been chosen by the Śiva. This falling of Śiva's power on neophyte is known technically in *Śaivāgama*-s as the *śaktipāta* or *śaktinipāta* (descent of power).

There are three different views regarding under what condition the descent of power occurs. The first theory is known as *karmasāmya*. As the term suggests when novice's two *karman*-s i.e., *sañcita* and *āgamika* that are of equal strength and opposing nature are ripened, the descent of power occurs. It is said in *Kiraṇāgama*:

śivo' pi mohanidrāyām suptān śaktyā prabodhayet /

yadā svarūpaviñjānaṃ patiteti tadocyate // 5.7 //

tasmācchaktinipātaḥ syānnipātaśccchinnavācakaḥ /

tannipātasya saḥ kālāḥ karmaṇāṃ tulyataiva ca // 5.8 //

Just as a teacher awakens pupils that have fallen asleep in front of him with a stick, so too Śiva awakens those asleep in the slumber of delusion with his power. When [a soul attains] realization of his own nature, then it is said that [Śiva's power has] fallen. Therefore it is a fall of power. The [expression] 'fall' [is used because it] expresses signs [characteristic of a fall]. The time of the descent of this [power] is also [that of] the equal balance of [simultaneously maturing] actions.³

But this theory did not get wide acceptance within the Śaiva community. It is later refuted and replaced by Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, one of the prominent *Saiddhāntika* exegetes, who advanced theory of *malapariṇāka* (ripening innate impurity) instead. According to this theory, Śiva's power of grace falls on him whose inherent impurity is ripened through the practice of Śaiva religion, virtuous conduct and so on. It is found in the *Paṇḍarāgama*, one of the twenty-eight *mūlāgama*-s, that it is not the equilibrium of *karman*-s that bring in liberation but the ripening of *mala*-s.

samatvaṃ karmaṇām nātra nimittaṃ tadanugrahe // 4.46 //

paripāko malasyaiva kiṃ tvanugrahakāraṇam /

A synthesis of these two postulations can be seen in the later South Indian Śaiva soteriology. This is evident from Śivāgrayogi's account of when descent of power occurs. It is as following:

When a brahman, kṣatriya, vaiśya, pure śūdra, or one of the anuloma caste such as suvarṇa reaches a state where his karman is equable (sāmya) and his mala ripened, then the highest Śakti first falls on him.⁴

It is to be noted that Abhinavagupta also accepted the *malaparipāka* theory.⁵ But according to his theology Śiva is absolutely free and independent and he graces the novice with his power at his will.

The Signs of Śaktipāta

The devotion towards the *guru*, devotees of Śiva and traditional wisdom are the main signs that tell the occurrence of descent of power. Prior to the start of rituals of initiation the *guru* must examine whether the descent of Śiva's power has fallen on candidate.

The Significance of Rituals of Initiation

A ritual serves several purposes. It is believed that its impact can be felt at different levels. One of effects guaranteed by texts is that it leads to salvation. The Śaiva exegete Rāmakaṇṭha maintains that the salvation which the *Saiddhāntika* scriptures speak of can be attained through rituals alone. The reason is that the *mala* being a *dravya* (substance), it cannot be destroyed by knowledge but by action alone.⁶

The Categories of Initiation

The *Siddhāntāgama-s* and *Paddhati* texts generally speak of various kinds of initiations namely, *samayadīkṣā* (general) *viśeṣadīkṣā* (particular) and *nirvāṇadīkṣā* (liberating). Their purposes also vary. The

former is the commonest form of initiation by which one gets entry into a cult.⁷ And the *Āgama*-s do not specifically mention about its effect on the fetters that restrain the freedom of soul.

The *viśeṣadīkṣā* is a special form of initiation by which one becomes rightful to perform the rituals and interpret scriptures. The difference between those who received *samaya* and *viśeṣadīkṣā*-s lies not only in the rituals but in the post-initiatory conducts also. For example; Aghoraśiva in his *Mṛgendrapaddhatīkā* points out the slight difference in the post-initiatory conducts of these two in the visualization of the deity in the *sandhyāvandana*. The visualization of the deity is said to be of two kinds namely, *sakala* and *niṣkala*. Those who have undergone *samaya* and *viśeṣadīkṣā*-s should meditate on the *sakala* form of the deity. Whereas; the *putraka* and others should meditate on the *niṣkala* form.⁸ The last one *nirvāṇadīkṣā* is advised for those who are desirous of salvation. These three are the general forms of *Saiddhāntika* initiation. But some scriptures deal with wide variety of initiation methods, they in essence are an extended forms of these three principal methods.

There is a hierarchy of initiates and they are presented in an ascending order as *samayin*, *putraka*, *sādhaka* and *ācārya*. The *samayin* is the one who has received the general form of initiation. The *putraka* is one

who has received the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*. And there separate rituals of initiation for *sādhaka*-s and *ācārya*-s. It has been observed that some of the *Āgama*-s deal with the private worship keeping the *sādhaka*-s in the mind. Helene Brunner observes:

Most of the *Āgama*-s that deal with private worship (and definitely seem to convey an older vision of the Śaiva religious activity than the ones devoted to temple rituals) were written having especially *sādhaka*-s in view.⁹

Among them only the *ācārya* is sanctioned to perform installation rituals.

The *Saiddhāntika* Rituals of Initiation

As already mentioned, nature and structure of rituals of initiation of four categories i.e., *samayin*, *putraka*, *sādhaka* and *ācārya* slightly vary from one another. Usually it takes at least two days to finish the rituals of initiation in its elaborate form. General outline of rituals of initiation is as given below.

First of all a *yāgamaṇḍapa* has to be built in accordance with the scriptural specifications. On the first day the procedure begins with *maṇḍalapūjā*. A particular diagram is drawn (usually *bhadraka* in both

Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava cults) and filled with powders. Subsequently the main deity is worshipped in it. Adjacent to the *maṇḍala* a sacrificial altar (fire pit) is made where the *homa* is done after the *maṇḍala* worship. When all these rituals are over both guru and śiṣya have to sleep there that night. On the next day the śiṣya is asked to describe the content of his dream. The nature of the dream serves as a pointer for deciding the rituals to be followed next day. In the case of inauspicious dreams various expiatory rites are suggested.

The highlights of next day rituals are placing the throne on the body of disciple, invoking the Śiva on it, placing the hand of Śiva (Śivahasta) on his head, imparting the mantra (*mantropadeśa*) and providing the rules and regulations (*samayācāra*).¹⁰

As the name indicates *viśeṣadīkṣā* is a special kind of initiation. It also known as *samskāradīkṣā*, e.g., *Somaśambhupaddhati* (SP) states *atha samskāradīkṣāyaṃ vidhānamabhidhīyate*. The most distinctive nature of this *dīkṣā* is that the initiate's soul is ritually removed from his body and placed it in the womb of *vāgīśvarī*, who is installed in the sacrificial fire. Then it is subjected to take birth in a number of worlds that follows a graded hierarchy according Śaiva theology. After this the soul is returned to the body and thenceforth he is known as *putraka*. One who has

undergone such a rite is eligible to do worship for himself and to study scriptures. If such a person aspires to go further he is given the *nirvāṇadīkṣā*.

The *nirvāṇadīkṣā* is relatively elaborate and highest form of initiation. Through this form of initiation the confining fetters of the soul are eliminated and the innate powers are let to manifest. In this context the efficacy of this form of initiation is often discussed in several texts (even by some of *Saiddhāntika* commentators). According to the scriptures *nirvāṇadīkṣā* does not bring immediate release of the soul from the cycle of birth and rebirth. In *Kiraṇāgama*, Śiva addresses Garuḍa by saying that this body remains after the consecration, just as a potter's wheel continues to spin even when the pot has been produced. The total release of the soul occurs only at the time of death according to *Śaivasiddhānta*. That is the total release of the soul is not possible while one is alive and not postulated over as an impact of *nirvāṇadīkṣā*. Sanderson observes:

[. . .] Initiation cannot be said to have destroyed all the individual's fetters when the individual is seen to live on in the embodied state, particularly when initiation is seen to bring about no marked change of personality in the majority of those who receive it. Thus it is that mantras, which are the immediate agents

by which fetters are destroyed during the ritual, are formulated to spare that portion of the person's past actions (*karma*) that is already bearing fruit (*prārabdham*) as current physical and mental state. This explains to the followers of the system why individuals continue to live after initiation and indeed why the survivors generally appear no wiser or better for having gone through it.¹¹

The Efficacy of Rituals

Initiates are bound to conform to traditional practices of daily rituals since they are said to loosen the effects of residues of present *karma*-s and take the initiate closer to liberation. The importance of ritual in general and rituals of initiation in particular lie in the belief that according to *Śaivasiddhānta*, knowledge alone could not liberate one from his bondage. It is because the impurity that causes him to be fettered is a material substance (*dravya*) can be removed by corresponding action (*karma*) alone. The daily ritual programmes of *Āgama*-s are devised in such a way that the major elements of rituals of initiation are reenacted and rehearsed. Richard H. Davis points out the parallelism between rituals of worship and daily rituals, particularly *ātmaśuddhi*, of an initiate as following:

[. . .] *Ātmaśuddhi* is regular, repeated action undertaken daily by the initiated Śaivite; initiation is a singular event in the career of a religious aspirant. *Ātmaśuddhi* is a rite embedded within the larger ritual of daily worship, whereas liberating initiation is itself an extensive, independent ritual unity. Most important, *Ātmaśuddhi* is a rite performed by the worshipper himself, while initiation is accomplished on the initiate by Siva acting through the Guru. *Ātmaśuddhi* does recapitulate many of the important features of *nirvāṇadīkṣā* [. . .].

Another point of discussion revolving around the efficacy of *ātmaśuddhi* or *bhūtaśuddhi* in obligatory rituals is that by repeatedly enacting the self-transformation the initiate gradually gets out of the impact of *māyāpāśa*. It is this *māyāpāśa*, which causes the soul to experience the world as such.¹²

The Non- *Saiddhāntika* Initiation

The non- *Saiddhāntika* sects include all the sub traditions that come under *mantramārga* of Śaivism. The similarities and contrasts in the rituals of initiation of these sub traditions are not taken as a subject matter for discussion in the present context. The fundamental soteriological concepts slightly vary from one sect to another. So do the philosophical

interpretation of function and efficacy of initiation. Sometimes certain concepts may seem similar but there are subtle variations. One of such differences in the outlook related to the initiation is the nature of *mala*-s. The major difference between the *Saiddhāntika* and non-*Saiddhāntika* understanding of fetter *mala* is that in latter, particularly in *Trika* and *Krama*, impurity (*mala*) is not perceived as a material (*dravya*) outside the consciousness, but default ignorance with the soul. Unlike their *Saiddhāntika* counterparts, the ritual is not an essential means for attaining liberation for non-*Saiddhāntika*-s, particularly for *Trika* and *Krama*. And ritual is a path of those who are not subjected to intense descent power. Both of these systems maintain that the descent of power may occur in different ways to different individuals. For some there is necessarily no need a medium for descent of power to occur. That means some individuals attain spontaneous enlightenment directly from Śiva (*svataḥ*). Such individuals will not live longer in human body, it is said. The intense fall of grace (*tīvraśaktipāta*) results in the sudden death of initiate. Here death is understood as release of the soul from fretters and ascend to self-realization. In the case of other individuals they may attain sudden self-realization without through a medium like a *guru* (*gurutaḥ*) or scriptures (*śāstrataḥ*). Such individuals can lead others to liberation. For some others, relying on any of the prescribed means like reasoning (*yukti*),

scripture (*śāstram*), the teaching of *guru*, or some other stimulus may bring in gradual or sudden liberation. Sanderson reproduces the scriptural views on those who have received low level descent of power as following:

Those who are not favored with a Descent of power of such intensity will achieve liberation only by taking refuge in a guru, coming to him through their own inspiration (*pratibhā*) or under the influence of a spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitraṃ*). But even among these there are those whom the resulting initiation liberates immediately and definitively. Nor it is necessary that this sudden transformation of consciousness should come about through initiation in its conventional ritual form. Initiation here may be the guru's oral teaching (*kathanam*), a silent transmission (*saṃkramaṇam*), his glance or touch, the unflinching acceptance and consumption of a sacramental impurity, and the other direct and powerful stimuli of this order.

So the religious life of *sādhaka* in tantric path begins after initiation. Once initiated, he should follow the words of his guru and learn scriptures at his feet till the traditional secrets are revealed to him.

The Vaiṣṇava Initiation: Initiation in the *Vaikhānasa* Cult

The fundamental doctrine of *Vaikhānasa*-s is that the Lord Viṣṇu himself directly initiates them. It is held that this happens during the pregnancy period. So they are called as '*garbhavaiṣṇava*-s'. Therefore they do not believe in the necessity of having a particular form of initiation to enable them for performing *vaiṣṇava* rituals. On the other hand, *viṣṇubali* is done along with the *sīmantasamkāra*, which is observed in the 8th month of conception. During the ritual *viṣṇubali*, specially prepared *pāyasa* is given to the pregnant woman and as a result of its consumption Viṣṇu himself initiates the fetus by his conch and disk.¹⁰

Categories of Initiations

One of the *Vaikhānasa* treatises *Kriyādhikāra* prescribes three kinds of initiation in order to be qualified to perform installation rituals. They are 1) *Mānasikī* 2) *Vācikī* and 3) *Śārīrikī*. As the name indicates, *Mānasikī* form of initiation is done mentally i.e. by the power of meditation and visualization. Second one, i.e. *Vācikī* is performed with the accompaniment of rituals; mostly it is in *cakrābjamaṇḍala*. The *Śārīrikī* or *Kāyikadīkṣā* means initiating a disciple by drawing the symbols of conch and disk on his body by piercing.

The only aim of initiation seems to be securing eligibility for observing rituals. *Vaikhānasa*-s do not claim that initiation grants liberation.

The *Pāñcarātra* Initiation

According to the principles of *Pāñcarātra*, the results of initiation are two-fold. On the one hand it qualifies an initiate to perform *vaiṣṇava* rituals¹³ and on the other it bestows liberation.¹⁴ It is to be noted here that the concept of *śaktipāta* does not appear in any of the *Vaiṣṇavasamḥita*-s. This is one of the main differences between the fundamental concepts behind *Āgamic* and *Pāñcarātra* initiation. Ritual procedures of initiation are almost similar both in *Vaikhānasa* and *Pāñcarātra* cult.

Some of the notable features of *Pāñcarātra* initiation are as follows:

The hierarchy of initiates¹⁵ is as follows: 1) *samayin*- who is bound by rules and regulations and completely ignorant of the fundamental texts and teachings of *Pāñcarātra* cult,¹⁶ 2) *putraka*- who received second level initiation and also considered as a son by the *guru*. It is because he has succeeded in following the rules and regulations of a *samayin*¹⁷ 3) *sādhaka*- who has learnt the fundamental scriptures and is very fond of

performing rituals. Here what makes *sādhaka* different from both *samayin* and *putraka* is that he alone is permitted to do rituals¹⁸ 4) *ācārya*- who is able to interpret scriptures and capable of imparting initiation to others. He enjoys the topmost position among initiates and privileged to perform all kinds of rituals and practices.¹⁹

The Śākta Initiation

The Śākta cult consists of many sub-cults. The cults of *Śrīvidyā*, *Kālī* and other Goddesses come under this cult. The philosophy behind the initiation and the ritual techniques are something specific to these cults. At the same time, they adopt all the fundamental elements from different streams of Śaivism. Initiation techniques are almost similar to that of *mantramārga* stream of Śaivism.

ii. Ritual Space

The ritual space can be broadly divided into two namely, temple and domestic. These are the major places where daily and occasional rituals prescribed in Āgamic and *Pāñcarātra* texts are performed. Though, mostly the temples are built according to Āgamic prescriptions, there are regional variations. And the structure and concept of temples have been changing in course of time.

Generally in tantric scriptures the temples are divided into three based on their structures. They are *drāviḍa*, *nāgara* and *vesara*.²⁰ The *drāviḍa* is that which is octagonal from the neck upwards. This temple model is primarily the characteristic of Pallava and Cola periods, e.g., Arjunartha and Dharmarajartha at Mamallapuram and Vetuvankovil at Kalugumalai. The distinguishing characteristic of *nāgara* type of temples is that they are square from the ground level to finial. This type of temples is also commonly found in Pallava and Cola periods. The temple which is round from the neck upwards is known as *vesara*. This type of temples e.g., Balasubrahmanya temple at Kannanur and Vijaya Coliswara temple at Narttamalai, also fall in the same period.²¹

Not everyone can perform rituals in temples because of caste restrictions. But there are no restrictions in domestic worship as any initiate can worship his family deities. The rules and regulations are not strictly followed in domestic worship. The rituals are comparatively less complex and short compared to that of temple worship.

iii. Utensils of Worship

The worship is of two kinds namely internal and external. The internal ritual is characterized by visualizing the deity in his / her several forms and offering *upacāra*-s mentally. In the external worship the deity is

invoked to a *pīṭha* and worshipped by offerings that constitute specific objects or their substitutes. Before starting the ritual per se, all the utensils of worship have to be placed ritualistically in respective places. The vessels / utensils that are commonly used in daily rituals are *vardhanī*, *śaṅkha*, *ghaṇṭā* and the special kinds of vessels for *gandha*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, *arghya*, *pādyā* and *ācamana*.

iv. Objects of Worship

The idol is the most common object of worship. It is usually made of stone, wood, metal and clay. But there are also several other media into which the deity is invoked and worshipped. And some of these are often considered to be incarnations of gods. The other objects of worship are water, fire, sun, earth, sky, food, gold, Brahmins, pot (*kumbha*), lotus (*kamala*), guests, *sālagrāma* stone, book, trident, sword, *maṇḍala* and *sthaṇḍila*. The purpose and offerings made to the god who is worshipped in these objects vary considerably.²²

v. Ritual

Four-fold Division of Rituals

As is already mentioned, tantric rituals are classified into four modeled on the *smārta* scheme of classification namely, *nitya*

(obligatory), *naimittika* (incidental), *kāmya* (optional) and *prāyaścitta* (expiatory). This is how the rituals in tantric scriptures of all cults are classified and observed in actual ritual contexts. In the texts that follow four-fold classification of contents, the rituals of these four categories occur in *kriyāpāda* section. Many of the scriptures of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva cults clearly demarcate and systematically explain these rituals in their *kriyāpāda* division. But there are instances where the demarcation lines are blurred or division of rituals into four groups is not followed systematically. These four categories of rituals may not be seen in all texts alike and exactly in the same order. There are some exceptions too. In some texts of *vidyāpīṭha* division of *mantramārga* of Śaivism the *kāmya* and *prāyaścitta* rituals may not necessarily be seen.

The rituals connected with temples occur in the *kriyāpāda* section whereas the rituals of initiation and code of conduct of initiates are given in *caryāpāda*. Here too there are some exceptions. As has been observed by Helene Brunner, in the *Kiraṇa* the *dīkṣā* and related rituals are given in the *kriyāpāda* whereas the rituals of consecration of images are provided in the *caryāpāda*.²³

Among the four categories of rituals, the *nitya* is obligatory for initiates. After the initiation an initiate is expected to follow certain rules

of conduct that include daily obligatory rituals. He is expected to do it for his own good either in a transportable idol or on a clean surface. The textual account of it begins with external rites of body purification like brushing the teeth, bathing, etc. After these preliminaries are over, the initiate starts the ritual proper, in which his deity of initiation is worshipped. In the ritual, as a preliminary step, gross and subtle bodies and all the cosmic principles that constitute the body and soul are purified first by means of *mantra*-s and *nyāsa*-s. These constituent parts of rituals are theoretically constructed in such a way that by doing them properly the worshiper gets transformed into the deity himself. This transformation is the most important element in a ritual. The preliminary steps in a ritual are theoretically constructed to foster this transformation within the worshipper. Subsequently, the vessels that are placed in the altar in a particular order are made ready for the worship. It is done by purifying the objects and vessels, filling the vessels with prescribed materials, ritualistically placing them on the specific space of the altar and invoking the presence of the deity into them. Followed by these purificatory rites the throne (*pīṭha*) is visualized as constituting the thirty-six cosmic principles, twenty-five principles in the case of Vaiṣṇava-s, and they are worshipped as embodied anthropomorphic and animal forms. These entire principles together make the throne a lotus, in a specific sense a seat for

the deity. The deity is invoked into this throne and worshipped with varying nature and numbers of offerings (*upacāra*-s). The numbers of offerings vary from five to ninety six. After the offering of *naivedya* the worship of fire is done and a share of *naivedya* is offered into it. The fire offering is also a part and parcel of daily worship. The *Somaśambhupaddhati* adds a few more ancillary ritual observances like the worship of cow (*kapilāpūjā*), worship of guru (*vidyāgurupūjā*) to daily ritual programme. These rituals are mainly done at the morning. There are some rituals to be done in the evening also. The importance of *nitya* lies in the fact that it cannot be avoided and must be performed at any cost by an initiate.

The *naimittika* is done on particular occasions, often calendrically on the same time every year. For example; *pavitrāropana* and *damanāropana*. The *utsava* is the other example of *naimittika* ritual. Mention may be made to two kinds of *utsava*-s, namely *nitya*²⁴ and *naimittika*, prescribed in the *Āgama*-s and some of the *Pāñcarātra* texts.²⁵ As the name suggests, the former is performed every day, whereas the latter is done every year on the same month. The *naimittika* festivals are also known as *mahotsava* and *brahmotsava*.²⁶

The *kāmya* is done for a special purpose to achieve something. It is

usually done for achieving wealth, offspring and long life. The rituals ranging from the construction of temples to the installation of idols, *maṭha*-s (Śaiva *maṭha*-s), *puṣkariṇī* (pond), *kūpa* (well) and *vṛkṣa* (tree) also come under the preview of *kāmya* rituals.²⁷

The *prāyaścitta* is done at the accidental mistakes, transgression of rules of conduct and occurrence of undesired results or omens.²⁸ It may take the forms of *abhiṣeka* or *homa*.

In short, a tantric practitioner's life is programmed around these rituals and practices. The nature and timings of rituals are similar in connection with temple observances also. So, the temple rituals are replica of domestic rituals of an initiate but comparatively more elaborated and time consuming.

The initiation alone qualifies one to learn the scriptures and perform the rituals prescribed therein. The nature and meaning of rituals vary according to the individual differences and desired objectives. Generally, the rituals are prescribed for two categories of people i) those whose primary concern is to attain liberation (*mumukṣu*) and ii) those who are desirous of attaining *siddhi*-s (supernatural powers). The fundamental structure of rituals of both remains same but the meaning and intensity vary to a great extent.

The *Ātmārthapūjā* and *Parārthapūjā*

According to scriptures of tantrism, particularly *Siddhānta Āgama*-s, an initiate is entailed to perform not only for his well being but also for others. Scriptures demarcate these two kinds of rituals under two heads viz., *ātmārthapūjā* and *parārthapūjā*.

As the names suggest, the former is done for oneself and the latter for others.²⁹ These public and private modes of worships constitute the core area of discussion of tantric treatises, particularly of *Saiddhāntika Āgama*-s and *Pāñcarātra* texts. In the *ātmārthapūjā* the deity is worshipped on one's personal image of Śiva (in the *Śaivasiddhānta* cult) which is given to him by the *guru* at the time of initiation.³⁰ Whereas, in the latter, static image of god is worshipped in temple by an officiating priest. Helene Bruner's observation as to how the *Āgama*-s deal with these two modes of worship is noteworthy in this context. She observes that demonstrably early Saiddhāntika texts like *Mṛgendra*, *Mataṅga*, *Sārdhdhatriśatīkālottara* and *Svacchanda* do not deal with *parārthapūjā* at all. The texts that predominantly deal with public worship are *Kāmika*, *Ajita*, *Kāraṇa*, *Kiraṇa*, *Raurava* and *Suprabhedā*.³¹ It is observed that there are instances where a demarcation line cannot be drawn and mutual influence of each other is quite clear.

These two influenced each other in the course of history, and the texts we have, describe a situation where a common structure has been framed and the original characteristics of each cult are almost completely obliterated.³²

It will be of great help presenting here the key observation made by Helene Brunner in her scholarly article on the topic. Her observations will help us to better understand the glaring differences between these two modes of worships. Her points can be summarized as follows:

i) Among the hierarchy of initiates *sādhaka*, who received special consecration qualifying him for the exclusive worship of a chosen deity, is entitled to worship the deity in an immovable image as a part of *ātmārthapūjā*. He can stop it doing after the attainment the desired goal or continue further.

ii) The *ātmārthapūjā* is not a synonym of "domestic" and the *parārtha* cannot be translated as "public" since some of ritual aspects are not open to public eyes. And also rituals remain same irrespective of presence or absence of public.

iii) The simplified model of *nityapūjā* given by Somaśambhu constitutes of four stages. 1. *dvārapūjā*, 2. *pañcaśuddhi*:- *ātmaśuddhi*, *sthānaśuddhi*, *dravyaśuddhi*, *mantraśuddhi* and *liṅgaśuddhi*. 3.

bāhyapūjā:- *āsanapūjā* and *mūrtinyāsa*, *āvāhanādi*,³³ *aṅganyāsa*,
upacāra-s³⁴ 4. *caṇḍapūjā*.

iv) Some of these ritual elements have only to do with the structure of temple. So it is suggested that *dvārapūjā*, *balidāna* and *caṇḍapūjā* may not be necessarily included in the *ātmārthapūjā*. Similarly, the *āvāhanā* (invocation) and *visarjjanā* is not necessarily to be done on the permanently installed images i.e., in temples.

v) Similarly, some ritual elements that seem to be out of place in the context of *parārthapūjā* are *āvāraṇapūjā* and *japa*.

vi) The avowed aims of these two cults also vary considerably from each other. While *parārthapūjā* in a temple is performed for all the *ātmārthapūjā* is done for special achievement, to say liberation, of *samayin*-s, *putraka*-s and *ācārya*-s. But in the case of *sādhaka*-s it is done for either liberation or worldly achievements.

vii) One must have undergone initiation to do any of these two rituals. In the case of those who do *parārthapūjā*, must have undergone *ācāryābhiṣeka*. That the one who is born in *ādiśaiva*, a descendent in direct line of one of five sages, alone can be an officiating priest in temples is not an old concept.³⁵ The reason is that several *Āgama*-s and *paddhati*-s ignore the concept of *ādiśaiva*.

Generally it is accepted in Tamilnadu.

As is shown some ritual elements that form part of *ātmārthapūjā* do not fit to the context as they fit aptly to *parārthapūjā* and vice versa. Texts do not provide a clear picture of where to draw demarcating line and the exact range and nature of each mode of worship. But one who is familiar with rituals and mode of presentation of *Siddhāntāgama*-s can distinguish both from each other.

The Secret of Ritual

Traditionally, it is held that the efficacy of a ritual lies in the conceptual transformation of the worshipper into the deity of the worship. This transformation is effected by *bhūtaśuddhi* or *dehaśuddhi* in a ritual. The lines that recur in texts with several variations is that *śivo bhūtvā śivam yajet*— one should worship Śiva after becoming Śiva himself. In its most general sense, one may likely to interpret that the worshipper has to become the deity even in external appearance. It cannot be totally ruled out because, certain cultic texts, for instance the texts of *Śrīvidyā* tradition, specifically say that the worshipper has to be even externally the deity of worship.

These are the fundamentals one has to know before approaching

the tantric texts. It is within this background of ritual traditions of *tantra*, the ritual specifications of Kerala *tantra* should be situated.

Notes

- ¹ *Rites and symbols of Initiation: the Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*, p. x.
- ² *ibid.*, p.2.
- ³ Dominic Goodall, *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Commentary on the Kiraṇatantra*, pp. 331-33.
- ⁴ Richard H. Davis, *Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India: Ritual in an Oscillating Universe*, p. 90.
- ⁵ *T.Ā*, V.9.
- ⁶ *Śaivism and Tantric Traditions*, p.16.
- ⁷ *itthaṃ samayadīkṣāyāṃ bhavedyogyaśśivārcane* / *SP*, 114;
guruḥ śiṣyāṃ stato brūyād yogyo 'si tvam śivārcane /
śrīkaṇṭhasya padaprāptyai samayī cā'pi dīkṣitaḥ // *Siddhāntaśekhara*, T.57,
p.315. cf. *Uttarakāmikāgama (U.Kām)* XX. 89-90.
evaṃ samayasamskārayukto yaśśivapūjane //
home cādhyayane caiva mantrāṇām śravaṇe'pi ca /
yogyassyānmunayo raudraṃ padaṃ prāpnoti mānavaḥ //
tato nirvāṇadīkṣāyāmadhikārī bhaved dvijaḥ /
- ⁸ *sakalanīṣkalabhedo dvividhaṃ* / *tatra samayi viśiṣṭasamayiviṣaye sakalaṃ*
putrakādiviṣaye' dhyātmani hṛdbindubrahmarandhraparasthāneṣu niṣkalam /
- ⁹ *The Place of Yoga in the Śaivāgamas*, p. 435.
- ¹⁰ *naninded kāraṇaṃ devaṃ na śāstraṃ tenabhāṣitaṃ* /
na guruṃ sādhaṃ caiva liṅgacchāyāṃ nalaṅghayet // III. 22 //
nādyān na laṅghayenmālyam nadadyācchivadīkṣite /
śivāgnigurupūjā ca kartavyā jīvitāvadhi // 23 //
- ¹¹ *The Doctrine of Mālinīvijayottara*, p. 286.
- ¹² Alexis Sanderson, *Meaning in Tantric Ritual*, pp.40-41.
- ¹³ *śṛṇu dīkṣāṃ pravakṣyāmi śiṣyānāṃ bhāvitātmanām*/
devāgnigurupūjāsu adhikāro yayā bhavet // (*Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, 16.1).
- ¹⁴ *yadyati kleśakarmādīnī kṣayatyakhilam padam* /
kṣapayitvā malaṃ sarvaṃ dadāti ca paraṃ padam //
dīkṣeti tena tattvajñairvarṇyate vedapāragaiḥ / (*Lakṣmītantram*, 41.5-6).
- ¹⁵ *punardīkṣyavibhedena trividhā sā caturvidhā* /

- samayīputrakścaiva tṛtīyaḥ sādhakastathā //*
ācāryaśceti dīkṣyāste teṣāmanyatra vistāraḥ //(*Lakṣmītantram*, 41. 7-8).
- 16 *dīkṣāmātram praviṣṭā ye kevalam samaye sthitāḥ /*
atantrajñā adevāśca te vai samayinaḥ smṛtāḥ / (*Sanatkumārasaṃhitā*,
Brahmarātra, 5.120).
- 17 *sādhako mantra tantrajñastantrapāṭhe vicakṣaṇaḥ /*
devatārādhane śaktaḥ sarvadā tattva parāyaṇaḥ / (*ibid.*, 121).
- 18 *karmāṇi sādhayennityam devapūjābhireva ca /*
sa sādhaka iti proktastantramantraviśāradaḥ // (*ibid.*, 122-23).
- 19 *vyākhyātā tantramantrāṇām saṃhitānām ca sarvataḥ /*
samskartāpi ca śiṣyāṇām ācārya sobhidhīyate // (*ibid.*, 124).
- 20 *prāsādam trividham proktaṃ nāgarādi vibhedataḥ //*104 // *Suprabheda:*
kriyāpāda.
nāgaram drāviḍam caiva vesaram ca tridhā matam /
kaṇṭhādārabhya vṛttaṃ yattadvesaramiti smṛtam // 205 //
grīvādārabhya cāṣṭāśram vimānaṃ drāviḍākhyakam /
sarvaṃ vai caturaśram yatprāsādam nāgaram tvidam // 206 //
- 21 *Ajītamahātantram*, Vol. I, critically edited, translated and annotated by N.R.
 Bhatt, Jean Filliozat and Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat, p. 141.
- 22 See Gudrun Buhnemann, *Pūjā: A Study in Smārta Ritual* for detailed account
 of the offerings made to each object.
- 23 *jñāna and kriyā: Relation Between Theory and Practice in the Śaivāgamas*,
 p.8.
- 24 See *Kāraṇāgama*, I. 140: verses 2-3.
- 25 See N.R. Bhatt, *Śaivism in the Light of Epics, Purāṇas and Āgamas*, pp.398-
 402.
- 26 See *Aghoraśivācāryapaddhati: Mahotsavavidhi*, p.1 ff.
- 27 See *SP*, pp. 206-297.
- 28 *sarveṣāṃ eva kāryāṇām kriyāvaikalyasambhave / Kāraṇāgama* I. 144: verses
 2-3.
- 29 *yajanaṃ svārthamākhyātam svasyeṣṭaphaladam yataḥ (P. Kām, 4, 2b)*
tat parārthamitiproktaṃ anyeṣāṃ phaladānataḥ (Ajītagama, kriyāpāda, 20,
7b)

- ātmārthañca parārthañca pūjā dvividhamucyate /
gurudehe śubhe liṅge sthaṇḍile ca nijātmani // Makuṭāgama. II.2 //*
- kṣaṇike maṇḍale toyē' pyātmārthayajanaṁ smṛtaṁ /
nirmitaṁ vidhinā pūrvam surairvā munibhir naraiḥ // II.3 //*
- svayamutbhūtaḥliṅgañca pratimā ceśvarātmikā /
parārthe samākyātāḥ sarveśāmātmānaḥ phalaṁ // II.4 //*
- viprakṣatriyavit śūdrādidīkṣitāścapraveśakāḥ /
ātmārthayajanaṁ kuryurnakuryuste parārthakam //*
- ūrdhvaśaivaistukartavyam ātmārthaṁ caparārthakam /
ūrdhvaśaiva itiprokta ssaśivabrāhmaṇo guruḥ // Makuṭāgama, 2, 6-7.*
- 30 *athārcanāvidhiṁ vakṣye bhuktimuktiphalapradam /
parārthaṁ svārthamityevaṁ dvividhaṁ tat prakīrtitam //*
- dīkṣānte guruṇā datte liṅge vā sthaṇḍilādike /
yajanaṁ svārtham ākhyātaṁ svasyeṣṭaphaladaṁ yataḥ //*
- grāmakheṭapurāḍau vā nadyāṁ parvata eva vā /
aṣṭaṣaṣṭi mahākṣetreṣvanyatra ca manorame / P Kām, 4, 14*
- 31 *ātmārthapūjā versus parārthapūjā in the Śaiva Tradition: In: The Sanskrit
Tradition and Tantrism, (Vol.1), fn. p.21.*
- 32 *ibid., p.4.*
- 33 *āvāhana, sthāpana, sannidhāna, nirodhana, avagunḍhana and amṛtīkaraṇa*
- 34 *pādya, ācamanīya, arghya, puṣpa, snāna, āvaraṇapūjā, dhūpa, dīpa,
naivedya, darpaṇa, pavitra, japa, pradakṣiṇanamaskāra, agnikārya, balidāna
and visarjana*
- 35 *ādiśaive kule jātaḥ śreṣṭhasyād sthāpanādīṣu /
viprādayaścaturvarṇā apiyogyā svakarmani // U.Kām,24,5*



SECTION TWO

THE KERALA *TANTRA*

Chapter Three

GENERAL FEATURES OF KERALA TANTRIC RITUALS

Generally speaking, there are two streams of living traditions of *tantra* in Kerala, namely brahmanical and folk traditions. The former can be further divided into two, as the tantric traditions of Kerala brahmins (comprising mostly of orthodox brahmins) and Śāktism of Mūssad-s. It would be proper to call "tantric traditions" of Kerala because there are many streams of tantric traditions in Kerala. In other words, it would be more appropriate to designate them as "familial traditions", because such traditions are known by name of particular brahmin family. Generally in discussions, tantric traditions of orthodox brahmins hold central stage and Śāktism of Mūssad-s often held marginal and neglected for the reason that they cling to *vāma* school of tantrism (*vāmamārgin-s*). Certain antinomian practices that from the part of religious practices of *vāma* school, keep them away from orthodox brahmins and general public. Regarding the folk tantric tradition, not many studies have been undertaken to bring to light its characteristic features and to explore its similarities in philosophy and practice with Āgamic tradition.

General Features of Brahmanical Traditions of *Tantra*

The brahmanical Kerala tantric tradition is unique in every aspect, for its practices ranging from temple construction¹ to ritual practices vary to a great extent from its Āgamic counterparts. Many of these

characteristic features have been elaborated by an array of scholars, beginning with E.V Raman Nampūtiri and subsequently by N.P. Unni after a few decades interval. Their major observations and contributions will be discussed in detail in the next chapter; so here some points that are not given due consideration in their works are discussed.

a) Hierarchy of Priests

Generally, the chief officiating priests who perform the major rituals- *naimittika* and *kāmya*- are known as *tantrin*-s throughout Kerala. Notably, pre-*Tantrasamuccaya* (*TS*) ritual manuals and *TS* itself do not employ the word *tantrin* to refer to such priests. The words *guru*, *ācārya* and *mantrin* are found to have used instead. Except a few ones, every temple in Kerala has a *tantrin*. But those temples which are consecrated and administered by renunciates (*sannyāsin*-s), *siddha*-s, *yoginī*-s or religious heads of privileged classes.

Two Kinds of *tantrin*-s / *ācārya*-s

There are two kinds of *tantrin*-s / *ācārya*-s viz., traditional and non-traditional. As it can be guessed rightly from the title, the former ones are those who belong to a family of *tantrin*-s and have been holding the esteemed position for generations.² The latter do not have any such

ancestry to claim. If a *tantrin* could no longer manage the charge of rituals of a temple for any reason, usually it is entrusted to someone outside his family, who may be his disciple or someone well-versed in ritual practices. The mode of transmission from a preceptor to his disciple sounds logical and sanctioned by traditions. But at present the scenario has completely changed to the extent of seeking the opinion of an astrologer for each and every matter. Nowadays it is the astrologer who suggests the *tantrin* of a temple and his words are considered to be authentic in this matter. What is wrong with this practice is that there is a better chance for administrative body and astrologer together to play political cards. It is to be stressed that the only role assigned to an astrologer in the ritual manuals is to suggest suitable *muhūrta* for the performance of important rituals.

The performance of a ritual would not be possible without the help of an assistant or assistants. Scriptures are particular about the qualities of an assistant. So evidently, the criteria laid down in texts are expected to have observed in actual practice in earlier times. The pre-*TS* texts particularly stress on the point that those who assist a chief priest in rituals must be initiates; in simple terms assistants must be disciples. The assistants are generally called as *parikarmin*-s or *mūrtipāḥ*³.

The *tantrin* and *parikarmin* are the two classes of priests generally seen in temples performing all sorts of rituals.⁴ On the occasion of the incidental rites (*naimittika*) i.e., installation and renovation rituals, there will be a supervisor called *sadasya*, whose duties involve making sure that all rituals are performed intact, performing *brahmakalaśapūjā*, *dhyānādhivāsa*, and suggesting the alternatives or expiation rituals in the case of known and unknown mistakes. Usually, a *sadasya* will be an adept who possesses commendable presence of mind as well as rich practical experiences in the respective field. Remarkably, the *sadasya* does not seem to have been given much importance in pre-*TS* literature.

b) The Basic Structure of a Ritual and its Categories

Generally in all tantric traditions, it is held to the core of beliefs that rituals are the direct means for the soul to ascend to the final stage of its existence. And the rituals are in a sense dramatic rehearsal in which the performer, being the deity within worships gross and subtle manifestations of his own consciousness. The meaning and the purpose of rituals vary in accordance with the soteriological outlook of a tradition. For a *Saiddhāntika*, rituals serve as a means which will gradually lead him to a state where he is equal to Śiva. For a non- *Saiddhāntika*, rituals help him to get always established in his own true nature. For some others rituals

generate power which can be channelized in order to get mundane needs fulfilled. But none of these seem to be the purpose of rituals for a tantric practitioner of Kerala. For him a ritual is performed for its own sake despite the texts like *Prayogamañjarī* (PM), *TS* and *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* (VS) explicitly or implicitly mention that the rituals are means to salvation. In the case of temple rituals, the structure and every day ritual programmes are capable of fostering the salvific desire of devotees.

When a tantric ritual is understood in its right sense, it will never be mistaken as an obsessive repetition of seemingly meaningless activities.⁵ But in present day scenario the rituals can be seen lost its real significance when the priestly class no longer cares to learn and imbibe the real purpose. For most of them it is another profession like anything else. This general disinterest is applicable in the case of Kerala brhmanical tantric traditions also.

The ritual performed in temples as well as outside the temple premises can be broadly categorized into three viz., *laghupūjā*, *sapārivārapūjā* and *ṣaḍaddhvanyāsapūjā* or *ṣaḍaddhvapūjā*.⁶ The ritual procedures in these categories follow a logical pattern. The order of ritual constituents is; *dehaśuddhi* (cleansing the body and subtle bodily constituents), *śaṅkhaṇḍa* (preparing the conch for ritual), *ātmārādhana*

(worshiping oneself after becoming the deity of worship himself), *pīṭhapūjā* (worship of throne), *āvāhana* (invocation) *mūrtipūjā* (worship of deity along with retinues) and *prasannapūjā* (propitiating the deity by chanting *stotra*-s and *mantra*-s) and finally *udvāsana* (taking back the deity to the source where he/ she is invoked from). Of these the first three are i.e., *dehaśuddhi*, *śaṅkhaṭpūraṇa* and *ātmārādhana*, preparatory by which the worshipper and the utensils are made eligible for worship.

In the performance of *dehaśuddhi*,⁷ which involves transforming the material body into divine by imposing *mantra*-s on the respective parts of body and yogic techniques of breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), the worshipper has to visualize himself as identified with the deity. The ultimate aim of ritual according to tantric scriptures is to sustain the godly consciousness that is awakened in a *sādhaka* during the initiation. And all the scriptures of tantrism unequivocally state that in order to worship, one has to become the deity of worship himself at conceptual level. This is where i.e., in identifying oneself with the deity, lies the secret of ritual.⁸

After being well established in the godly consciousness through visualization and imposing different *mantra*-s on the different parts of the body the worshipper prepares the utensils particularly *vardhanī* (*kiṇḍi* in Malayalam) and *śaṅkha* by filling the water (*śaṅkhaṭpūraṇa*) after

invoking the presence of *gaṅgā* and the deity of worship into it. It is to be noted here that the order of arrangement of vessels (*pūjāpātrāṇi*) is one of the particular features of Kerala tantric rituals. It is not clearly known how such a system has evolved. It may be the result of influence of sacrificial cult (*yāgasampradāya*) and the ritual system of *Śrīvidyā* cult. After the preparatory rites of the *śaṅkha*, the water is sprinkled over all the materials that are set ready for worship. While doing *ātmārādhana* worshipper has to visualize to have transformed physically to the deity and worship himself. In *ṣaḍaddhvapūjā*, this process is much elaborated as the deity is invoked into worshipper's heart after visualizing it as throne (*pīṭha*) and doing elaborate worship to all constituent parts of the throne.

In the next step the throne of the deity is worshipped. The pantheon consisting of all supporting principles and divinities is worshipped from its base to the center. The supporting figures are *ādhāraśakti*, *mūlaprakṛti*, *kūrma*, *ananta* and *pṛthvi*. In addition to these, eight manifestations of the principle of intellect (*buddhi tattva*, i.e., *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, *aiśvarya*, *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairāgya* and *anaiśvarya*), three inherent natures (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), two covers (*ācchādana*, viz., *māyā* and *vidyā*), four kinds of souls (*ātmacatuṣṭaya*, i.e., *ātman*, *antarātman*,

paramātmān and *jñānātmān*)⁹ and *navaśakti*-s are also worshiped in *saparivārapūjā*.

Subsequently the deity is invoked into the throne thus made by cosmic principles. The deity is invoked from within and all the *nyāsa*-s performed on the worshipper's body are done in the idol also. The only difference between *saparivārapūjā* and *ṣaḍaddhvapūjā* is that in the latter *ṣaḍaddhvanyāsa* is done on the worshipper's body during the *dehaśuddhi* and the same *nyāsa*-s are done on the idol after invocation. Rest of the rituals is one and the same.

The invocation procedure is another peculiarity of Kerala tantric tradition. Texts prescribe that the deity has to be invoked from one of two centers i.e., either from the *hṛdaya* or *mūlādhāra*. If the deity is not invoked from within, the other optional centers are cosmic power (*prapañcaśakti*) or disc of sun (*sūryamaṇḍala*). It is to be noted that very much importance is attached to *sūryamaṇḍala* as a center in Kerala tantric traditions in particular. It is from where the *gaṅgā* is invoked and to where the *vāsanāśakti*-s (inherent impulses) of deity are diffused in the context of *bimboddhāra* ritual.¹⁰ After the performance of formal rituals of receiving a deity with offerings (*upacāra*-s)¹¹ he/she along with retinues

are propitiated in *mūrtipūjā*¹². It is only in *saparivārapūjā* the retinues are worshipped with offerings (*upacāra*-s). Here in this context in certain traditions the retinues are visualized to have spread around (*parivāraprasaraṇa*) and worshipped (*puṣpāvaraṇa*) at the start and end of *mūrtipūjā*. Following it the *naivedya* is offered to deity. At this juncture *bali* is offered to *agni* and at certain temples *vaiśvahoma* is also done.

Subsequently, the *prasannapūjā* is done with the door closed from inside. As the name indicates it is the time for propitiating the deity with *mantra*-s and for personal *sādhana*. At the end of the *prasannapūjā* the door is opened and the ritual culminates in the *udvāsana*. Usually, the *udvāsana* is not done where the deity is permanently installed and worshipped. This is the short description of procedures of worship. This basic pattern is more or less similar in all tantric traditions of Kerala whether it is done in the dwelling places or temples.

Notably, the *laghupūjā* does not find room particularly in pre-*TS* ritual manuals. That means original texts prescribe the *saparivārapūjā*-s only. The hierarchy exists only in practice. The *ṣaḍaddhvapūjā* is done comparatively less frequently as it is done while doing *kalaśapūjā* or on the occasions of installation or renovation rituals.

c) The Ritual Space

All tantric rituals presuppose a space. It is in this real or imaginative space the presence of a particular deity is invoked. Scriptures speak of several of such locations eligible for worship, which include icon, human body, disc of sun and moon, water, fire, *maṇḍala*, *yantra* etc. These are the ritual spaces generally prescribed in all tantric scriptures alike.

Among these spaces of worship measurement, layout, method of drawing *maṇḍala*-s and the nature and source of color powders that used to fill in them deserve special consideration. Kerala has got a distinct tradition of making *maṇḍala*-s with reference to the Āgamic or *Pāñcarātra* Tradition. It is a subject of great value and scope particularly in the field of art and can be taken up as separate topic for research. It is yet to be studied what accounts for these differences in the preparation of *maṇḍala*-s from its Āgamic counterpart.

d) The Rituals of *Utsava*

The rituals of *utsava* are performed on the same month every year mostly based on the date and astronomical star (*nakṣatra*) of consecration of idol. Generally, they last for seven consecutive days, but there are

exceptions. The actual ritual performances of *utsava* are marked by the flag hoisting (*dhvajārohaṇa*) and culminates in ritual bath (*tīrthasnāna*). The flag hoisting is followed by worshipping the deity with special offerings, worship of the seeds (*aṅkurapūjā*) twice in every day and performance of *śrībhūtabali* twice in a day viz., morning and evening. In major temples across Kerala the *śrībhūtabali* that performed in the morning is replaced by *utsavabali*.¹³

Kinds of *bali* Offerings

The performance of *bali* offerings is a distinct feature of Kerala tantric temple rituals. The *bali* offerings can be divided into three viz., *śīveli*, *śrībhūtabali* and *utsavabali*. Though there are references of four more kinds of *bali*-s in scriptures namely, *jayābali*, *vijayabali*, *durgābali* and *kaumārabali*, the last three are totally extinct now. It is interesting to note that *jayābali* is still performed every year at *Tṛkkaṭīrī Śrī Mūnnumūrti* temple situated at Palakkad district. This is the only temple in Kerala where *jayābali* is performed even at present. There the rituals are performed by one of the members of Īkkāṭṭu family.

The *śīveli* is the shortest of *bali*-s which is performed in most of the temple every day, particularly in *mahākṣetra*-s. The other instance in

which the *śīveli* is performed is at the end of installation of idol (*bimba pratiṣṭhā*). Here it is a part of incidental rites (*naimittika*).

Whereas, in *śrībhūtabali* all retinues of the principal deity installed around the sanctum sanctorum within a temple complex are propitiated with *upacāra*-s and offerings are made to them by cooked rice.¹⁴ It is performed mainly during the festival seasons (*utsava*). But it is also performed on specific occasions like on the second day of *prāsādaśuddhi* (a group of purificatory rituals performed on the previous day of flag hoisting during the festival season. The ritual package consists of *prāsādaśuddhi*, *astrakalaśapūjā*, *rakṣoghnahoma*, *vāstuhoma*, *vāstubali*, *vāstukalaśābhiṣeka* and *vāstupuṇyāha*. These rituals mark the beginning of festival and they are done in the evening after sunset. On the very next day morning *catuśśuddhi*, *dhārā*, *pañcagavya*, *pañcaka* and *pañcaviṃśati kalaśa*-s are set ready by worshipping each one separately in pots and the idol is bathed by each of these pots. And these purificatory rites culminate in *śrībhūtabali*.), after *anujñākalaśābhiṣeka* on the sixth day evening of renovation rituals (here it called as *anujñābali*), at the end of *mahābalipīṭha pratiṣṭhā* and on the last day of installation as well as renovation rituals.

In the *utsavabali*, the offering procedures are much more elaborated and the pantheon of retinues consists of relatively a few more deities

particularly worshipped at the inner compound (*antahārā*).¹⁵ Moreover, it is performed only on the *utsava* season.

On the six day night the deity is taken in procession for 'royal hunting' (*paḷḷivēṭṭa* in Malayalam), which is an act of shooting an artificially created wild beast. After this dramatic enactment of royal hunting the deity is taken back to the *maṇḍapa* and where he is laid to rest whole the night (*paḷḷikkuṛuppu*- royal sleep) in a ritually prepared bed (*śayyā*) that is surrounded by the greenish sprouts (*bījāṅkura*-s). In the following day the deity is awakened before sunrise by showing the *aṣṭamaṅgala*-s and cow as an auspicious sings and ritually anointed by several kinds of oily substances (*dravya*-s). After this ritual drama is over, *yātrāhoma* is performed and the deity is taken in procession mounted on the elephant or a temporary vehicle accompanied by percussion instruments, performing danseuses and civilians for the holy bath (*tīrthasnāna* or *avabhṛtasnāna*). And after the holy bath the deity is taken back to the temple and the rituals of *utsava* culminates in the *śrībhūtabali* which is preceded by the dawning the flag and ritual bath (*kalaśābhiṣeka*).

e. The Rituals of *jīrṇoddhāra*

The consecration rituals are the complex and elaborated of all rituals performed within a temple compound. Generally, the other rituals

of same structure and order, which are performed incidentally and characterized by presence of considerable number of *kalaśakumbha*-s, are known as '*kalaśa*-s' throughout Kerala. The prefix added to the word the *kalaśa* is the identification mark by which the nature and range of application of rituals can be identified. They are *dravyakalaśa*, *aṣṭabandhakalaśa*¹⁶ and *navīkaraṇakalaśa*. The last one is also known as *jīrṇoddhāra*.

To differentiate the above ones from each other it is necessary to have an idea of the order of arrangement rituals. Among these the rituals of *jīrṇoddhāra* are very complex and contain all the rituals of other two i.e., *dravyakalaśa* and *aṣṭabandhakalaśa*. Hence for the practical reasons the details of *jīrṇoddhāra* are given first as a framework and the differences in other two kinds are enumerated on this basis.

The Ritual Details of *jīrṇoddhāra*

No. of Days	Rituals in the Morning	Rituals in the Evening/ Night
1 st Day		<i>ācāryavaraṇa, aṅkurāropaṇa, prāsādaśuddhi, astrakalaśapūjā, rākṣoghnaḥoma, vāstuhoma, vāstukalaśapūjā, vāstubali, vāstukalaśābhīṣeka, vāstupuṇyāha</i>
2 nd Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā, catuḥśuddhi, dhārā, pañcagavya, pañcaka, bimbaśuddi, proktahoma, homakalaśābhīṣeka</i>	<i>kuṇḍaśuddhi, aṅkurapūjā</i>

3 rd Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā, prāyaścittahoma, śāntihoma, atbhutaśāntihoma, homakalaśābhiṣeka</i>	<i>kuṇḍaśuddhi, aṅkurapūjā</i>
4 th Day	<i>śvaśāntihoma, coraśāntihoma, homakalaśābhiṣeka</i>	<i>bimbapari-graha, jalādhivāsa, aṅkurapūjā</i>
5 th Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā, agnijanana, tatvahoma, tatvakalaśapūjā, anujñākalaśapūjā, brahmakalaśapūjā, parikalaśapūjā, tatvakalaśābhiṣeka,</i>	<i>adhivāsa-homa, kalaśādhivāsa, aṅkurapūjā</i>
6 th Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā, adhvāsapūjā, parikalaśābhiṣeka, brahmakalaśābhiṣeka,</i>	<i>anujñābali, anujñā prārthanā, aṅkurāropaṇa, aṅkurapūjā, bimbaśuddhikalaśapūjā, adhvāsa-homa</i>
7 th Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā, śayyāvidyeśvarakalaśapūjā, nidrākalaśapūjā, kumbheśakarkkarīpūjā, śīrastatvahoma, pratiṣṭhāhoma, jaloddhāra, bimbaśuddhi, saṃhāratatvahoma, saṃhāratatvakalaśapūjā, prārthanā, saṃhāratatvakalaśābhiṣeka, dhyānaśāntihoma, jīvākalaśapūjā, dūrvvāśāntihoma, liṅgoddhāra, jalādhivāsa</i>	<i>prāsādaśuddhi, dhyānādhivāsa, pīṭhādhivāsa, maṇḍalapūjā, adhvāsa-homa, adhvāsapūjā,</i>
8 th Day	<i>adhivāsapūjā, prāsādaśuddhi, prāsādapraṭiṣṭhā, napuṃsakaśilāpraṭiṣṭhā, liṅgapraṭiṣṭhā, pīṭhapraṭiṣṭhā, kumbheśakalaśābhiṣeka,</i>	<i>aṅkurapūjā</i>

	<i>nidrākalaśābhiṣeka,</i> <i>jīvakalaśābhiṣeka,</i> <i>jīvāvāhana, prāṇanyāsa,</i> <i>puryaṣṭakanyāsa,</i> <i>sthūlāvāhana,</i> <i>stotrāvāhana, pāyasapūjā,</i> <i>nityapūjā,</i> <i>nītyanidānapratijñā,</i> <i>pratiṣṭhādakṣiṇā,</i> <i>dvārapidhāna</i>	
9 th Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā,</i> <i>parivārahoma,</i> <i>parivārapratīṣṭhā,</i> <i>mātrpratiṣṭhā,</i> <i>nirmālyadhāripratiṣṭhā</i>	<i>aṅkurapūjā</i>
10 th Day	<i>proktahoma,</i> <i>prayaścittahoma,</i> <i>śāntihoma,</i> <i>kumbheśakarkarīpūjā,</i> <i>caturthabrahmakalaśapūjā</i> <i>, parikalaśapūjā</i>	<i>adhivāsahoma, kalaśādhivāsa</i>
11 th Day	<i>adhivāsapūjā,</i> <i>dvārodghāṭana,</i> <i>homakalaśābhiṣeka,</i> <i>parikalaśābhiṣeka,</i> <i>kumbheśakalaśābhiṣeka,</i> <i>caturthabrahmakalaśābhiṣeka,</i> <i>avasrāvaprokṣaṇa,</i> <i>śrībhūtabali</i>	

(Table: III. 1)

In the *dravyakalaśa* the rituals up to the sixth day morning are performed as in *jīrṇoddhāra* and it ends with *śrībhūtabali*. It is performed every year as an empowerment ritual package. In *aṣṭabandhakalaśa*, the

rituals of first eight days (see Table: III. 1) are performed as such and it culminates in setting the *bimba* and *pīṭha* tight by means of *aṣṭhabandha*.

As it is illustrated in the above chart (Table: III. 1) the full-fledged *jīrṇoddhāra* ritual consists of eleven days but in some cases the rituals are cut-short to absolute minimum. Most probably, due to financial shortage or lack of necessary infrastructure or human and material resources the rituals are cut-short sustaining only the necessary ones. In that case the complete programme will be finished within three or six days. Scriptures also lend support to it by instructing that the full-fledged ritual package has to be done only if it is financially affordable to temple authorities. Otherwise the *tantrin* is free to decide the rituals to be included and execute considering financial affordability, availability of resources and other relevant factors.

In the above chart (Table: III. 1) the rituals performed up to fourth day morning are expiatory in nature. The *kalaśa* proper begins with fourth day evening rituals i.e., *bimbaparigraha*. It is an act of ritually receiving the newly sculpted idol from the architect after the rituals of opening the eye of *bimba* (*netronmīlana*). Then it is kept in the water (*jalādhivāsa*). On the next day the rituals begin with *tattvahoma* in which all the cosmic principles (*tattva*-s) that constitute the body of the deity are dissolved

(*tattvasamhāra*) and re-created (*tattvasṛṣṭī*). And the deity is anointed with *tattvakalaśa* which is placed adjacent to the sacrificial altar (*homakuṇḍa*) and worshipped along with the fire offerings. It is followed by *anujñābrahmakalaśapūjā* and *parikalaśapūjā*. For that purpose a special stage is made ready by drawing a huge *maṇḍala* proportionate in size to number of pots (*kalaśa*-s) that are to be placed in it. The *kalaśa*-s are placed in the *maṇḍala* in such a way that the center position is reserved for *brahmakalaśa* and the rest of *parikalaśa*-s are placed around within the *maṇḍala*. As the name indicates the purpose of the grand bath is to get permission to proceed to consecration rituals. The interesting fact is that the *kalaśābhiṣeka* is the principal means by which the permission of the deity is sought for any purpose. The same logic is applied here also. On the very next day morning the deity is bathed with the *kalaśa*-s which constitute not only the water but also the other *kalaśa* ingredients like fruits (*phala*), different kinds of soils (*mṛt*), oily substances, gems etc. Excluding *bimbaparigraha*, the rest of procedures are same in the *dravyakalaśa*. The *bimbaparigraha* is done only when the idol that is regularly worshiped is to be replaced because of broken major limbs. In the case of minor wreckages it is sustained as such by temporary repair of the constituent limbs.

The *aṣṭabandhakalaśa* is performed if the *aṣṭabandha* is totally or partially misplaced or damaged. In that case also all the above explained rituals are performed in the same manner. The difference between *dravyakalaśa* and *aṣṭabandhakalaśa* is that the latter culminates in the fixation of the new *aṣṭabandha*. After the *parikalaśābhīṣeka* the *aṣṭabandha* is fixed with accompanying rituals between the gap of *bimba* and *pīṭha* after removing the damaged remnants completely without leaving any trace of it. Before it is done the gap (*vivara*) is filled with thin golden plates (*svarṇaśakala*), sand and gems (*ratna*) of several kinds. After the rituals of *aṣṭabandha* are over the deity is bathed with the *brahmakalaśa*. In short, the additional ritual in the *aṣṭabandhakalaśa* is the fixing the *aṣṭabandha* just before the *brahmakalaśābhīṣeka*.

The characteristic features of rituals of *jīrṇoddhāra* will be explained in detail in the fifth chapter. Here the rituals of consecration of a new temple (*nūtanapratīṣṭhā*) are explained. Except omission of a few rituals, most of the ritual procedures are similar to *jīrṇoddhāra*.

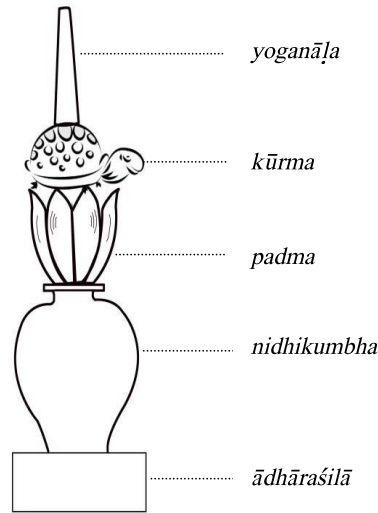
The procedures begin with procurement of a proper place for construction and testifying the suitability of the land by applying certain methods prescribed in the scriptures. They are well elaborated in pre-*TS*

literature and the procedures are more or less parallel to Āgamic tradition.

The uniqueness lies in the rites of laying foundation.

Following the preliminary rituals (*iṣṭakānyāsa*, *garbhanyāsa* etc.) of transforming the land into an appropriate one for constructing a permanent abode for the deity, six kinds of specifically prepared utensils representing of 'six centers' (*ṣaḍādhāra*) are placed hierarchically exactly underneath the space where the deity is to be installed. Then the sanctum sanctorum is built over it. So, vertically the deity is situated at the top of *ṣaḍādhāra*-s. The concept, order and structure of *ṣaḍādhāra*-s are distinct

The *Ṣaḍādhāra*-s



(Figure: III. 1)

from other parallel traditions and a unique feature of Kerala tantric tradition. The above given picture (Figure: III. 1) illustrates the order and shapes of five *ādhāra*-s. The sixth one is absent in the picture and this position is assumed by *napuṃśakaśilā* which is placed on the top as the sixth *ādhāra*.

After the completion of construction works, sanctum sanctorum in particular, the *tantrīn* is summoned by the *ūrāḷa* (the owner) for further proceedings. As said earlier, many ritual procedures are similar and it will suffice here to note only the differences in procedures. The rest of rituals are similar to *jīrṇoddhāra*. The below given chart will sufficiently illustrate the procedures in detail.

The Ritual Details of *nūtanapratiṣṭhā*

No. of Days	Morning	Evening
1 st Day		<i>ācāryavaraṇa, aṅkurāropaṇa</i>
2 nd Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā</i>	<i>bimbapari-graha, jalādhivāsa, aṅkurapūjā</i>
3 rd Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā</i>	<i>aṅkurapūjā</i>
4 th Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā</i>	<i>bimbaśuddhikalaśapūjā,</i>

		<i>adhivāsahoma, aṅkurapūjā,</i>
5 th Day	<i>aṅkurapūjā, śayyāvidyeśvarakalaśapūjā, nidrākalaśapūjā, kumbheśakarkkarīpūjā, śīrastattvahoma, pratiṣṭhāhoma, jaloddhāra, bimbaśuddhi,</i>	<i>prāsādaśuddi, dhyānādhivāsa, pīṭhādhivāsa, maṇḍalapūjā, adhivāsahoma, adhvāsapūjā,</i>
6 th Day	<i>adhivāsapūjā, prāsādaśuddhi, prāsādapraṭiṣṭhā, napuṃsakaśilāpraṭiṣṭhā, liṅgapraṭiṣṭhā, pīṭhapraṭiṣṭhā, kumbheśakalaśābhiṣeka, nidrākalaśābhiṣeka, jīvakalaśābhiṣeka, jīvāvāhana, prāṇanyāsa, puryaṣṭakanyāsa, sthūlāvāhana, stotrāvāhana, pāyasapūjā, nityapūjā, nityanidānapraṭijñā, praṭiṣṭhādakṣiṇā, dvārapidhāna</i>	

(Table: III. 2)

These are the characteristic features of brahmanical Kerala tantric tradition. The other features that are not discussed here will be given due consideration while analyzing the studies of previous scholars critically. Many procedures are parallel to Āgamic tradition but the elements of Kerala brahmanical ideologies and practices also reflect throughout the ritual observances. It is only after an in-depth analysis of every single element of practice and locating its philosophical implication within a broad context the exact nature and working dynamics of Kerala

brahmanical tradition of tantrism can be predicted. This can be achieved by applying the parameters of historical and cultural studies. The present study does not touch upon either. A historian can easily distinguish the necessary data he needs to reconstruct the picture of intellectual and religious history of brahmins of Kerala.

The Śākta Tradition of Mūssad-s

The Mūssad-s of Kerala are brahmins by caste but they are marginalized and degraded by brahmin orthodoxy. Members of these families believe themselves to have affiliated with decedents of Śākta school of Kashmir. Scholars who have took great effort to trace the trajectory and historical date of arrival of Kashmiri brahmins in Kerala could not convincingly establish both beyond doubt even today.

The tradition of *tantra* they inherited is quite different from Kerala tradition. In order to understand the tradition in its length and breadth, we have to consider all the aspects of the tradition like system of worship, fundamental texts and ethical values. Here the discussion is confined to some characteristic features of worship of Kālī-s because they deserve a special consideration. Since the subject is very complex and requires an in-depth study some observations based on previous studies and experience alone can be given at present.

There are thirteen *Kālī Kāvu-s* (groves) across Kerala mostly concentrated on northern Kerala, erstwhile Malabar, and they are noted for unique customs and ritual practices, where *Mūssad-s* enjoy a special privilege to perform rituals every day. In these thirteen temples namely, *Māṭāyikkāvu* (Kannur), *Mannampurattukāvu* (Kannur), *Piṣārikkāvu* (Koyilandy), *Valāyanāṭu* (Kozhikkode), *Koḍikkunnu* (Malappuram), *Māmānikkunnu* (Irikkoor), *Koduṅgallūr*, *Panayanārkkāvu* (Mannar, Thiruvalla), *Muttūrrukāvu* (Thiruvalla), *Tirumāndhāṅkunnu* (Malappuram), *Kaḷiyāṁvaḷḷi* (Kozhikkode), *Tiruvañcerykkāvu* (Kannur, Kuthuparamba) and *Kaḷarivātukkal* (Kannur) the deities Śiva, Rurujit, Caṇḍakapālīnī, Bhadrakālī, Māṭṛ-s and *Kṣetrapāla* are installed and worshipped within the same temple complex. The central space in these temples is occupied by *Mahārtha* / *Rurujit* who is installed southern side of Śiva's shrine in a rectangular sanctum sanctorum (called *māṭṛśālā*) facing either east or north or west and next to her is installed *māṭṛ-s* facing the north. Here the *Mahārtha* is worshipped in the *Śrīcakra* and the *Caṇḍakapālīnī* is worshipped in her anthropomorphic form on the idol installed at the center of sanctum sanctorum. Notably, other than in these temples the anthropomorphic representation of Māṭṛ-s are hardly found housed and worshipped separately.

The distinguishing feature of rituals of these temples is that they are the syntheses or meeting points of different cults and practices. It is here we could find the cults of Kashmir namely, *Trika*, *Krama* and *Kaula* meet together to form a unique cult of worship of Rurujit called "*Rurujitvidhāna*". Some of these thirteen temples are strategically invaded and religiously dominated by Kerala brahmin *tantrin*-s. No matter who does daily rituals in these thirteen temples, the *tantrin*-s or chief officiating priests of these temples are brahmin priests. It is to be noted that the brahmin priests and Mūssad-s who perform worship in these temples follow two entirely different systems of worship and they do never meet at all. Everything from the visualization of deity to customs and ritual practices varies considerably for both and fundamentally conflict with each other. These temples stand out as clear evidences of brahmanical domination and encroachment into the religious sphere or institutions of other castes. Evidently, orthodox brahmins could not follow the ritual system of Śākṭeya brahmins as such due to the fact that their customs and practices contain anti-brahmanical elements, which are central to the system, particularly the use of *pañcamakāra*-s. Moreover, orthodox brahmins could not understand the relative position of specialized pantheons within a ritual context and also their ritual nuances and underlying soteriological speculations. The end result was the entire

system is remodeled on the line of brahmanical system of worship centering the Śiva. The Śiva is worshipped in his Bhairava form and the Rurujit is mistakenly worshipped as Cāmuṇḍā. And the brahmanical systems of worship are reinstated in these temples through this process. As mentioned earlier, not all of these temples are totally dominated by brahmins but just five of them namely, *Muttūr̥ru*, *Panayannār*, *Koduṅgallūr*, *Tirumāndhāṅkunnu* and *Koḍikkunnu*. After all, these temples are now the perfect examples of *anyamantrayajana*, which is strictly prohibited by the scriptures of all tantric cults alike.

The fundamental scriptures prescribing the rituals of these deities are said to be *Māṭṛsadbhāva* (*Mā.Sad*) and *Śeṣasamuccaya* (*ŚS*). But the ritual system in both of these texts is a representative of a typical Kerala brahmanical ritual model. But interestingly, ritual system of Mūssad-s is rightly based on certain manuscripts handed down for generations which are still kept intact by certain families. The prescriptions are followed thoroughly while performing rituals in these temples even today.

It can be safely concluded that until a devoted academic study is carried out on the historical process of evolution of these temples, worship and the cultural milieu which enabled such distinct system to run its roots into the soil of Kerala, it will remain as an unproven hypothesis.

The Tantric Elements in the Folk Cultural Expressions

The religious observances of tantrism encompass a wide spectrum of ritual practices that are either aimed at mundane enjoyment (*bhukti*) or salvation (*mukti*). Rituals are part and parcel of tantrism and the thin line which demarcates systems of tantric worships from vedic ritual system is often very difficult to discern. When the religious observances of multiple castes and their sub-castes of Kerala are seen from this angle, they are found in many ways similar to tantric observances. Every caste in Kerala inherits a ritual system and historically it can be established that low castes were never prohibited from performing such a system of ritual practice within the territories of their reach. Not only the *Kāvu*-s (groves) across Kerala are the living testimonies to this relative freedom to express publically the diverging religious practices of low castes but also small shrine-like structures of private worship found to have erected particularly in close proximity of households.

Of the many means of expression of public worship, the *Teyyam* features one of important annual cultural events in Kerala, particularly in Malabar region. Several studies have been done on its peculiarities, socio-cultural and mythological interconnectedness and impact under the head of folk lore studies.¹⁷ These studies indeed helped to understand the

religious history of Kerala within a broad context and to reconstruct it in the light of new evidences. But none of them has attempted to interpret intrinsic nature and content of this cultural art form from within the context of tantrism. It is here lies the importance of the pioneering efforts made by Rich J. Freeman, Visiting Assistant Professor, Duke University, Durham, who links the central ideologies of Kerala tantric rituals with *Teyyam* performances.¹⁸ The core idea of his argument is that the "formalized possession" is the common thread running through both brahmanical tantric ritual practices of Kerala (or tantric rituals in general) and *Teyyam* performances. By the expression "formalized possession" he means:

[. . .] the widespread belief throughout south India that formally stipulated and ritually prepared "bodies", whether of animate or inanimate matter, can routinely become receptacles for the consciousness and person of deities. It is through these bodies that deities are subsequently perceived to interact, communicate with, and tangibly benefit worshippers, and this indeed constitutes the *raison d'etre* of worship. By highlighting the formal features of this paradigm of worship I intend to stress the facts that possession phenomena are: 1) culturally constructed and codified at the conceptual level; 2) socially stipulated and

regulated at the level of organization and recruitment; and 3) ritually effected through the process of performative enactment.¹⁹

He further argues that the preliminary procedures in both tantric worship and *Teyyam* are to trigger and effect the possession in its fullest form of expression. He observes:

The central tenets of worship are similarly predicated on the ability of the Brahman priests to install the conscious power (caitanya) of the deities into permanent images which are protectively insulated in temples as repositories of that power, in order to conduct controlled ritual interactions with the deities on behalf of worshippers. As stated earlier however, what is characteristically tantric in this tradition is that this ability to install and maintain a deity depends centrally on the priest's ability to first invoke the god into his own body - in some sense, to himself become the god. It is only subsequent to this process of self-invocation that this caitanya is deposited in the permanent images.²⁰

But this account of tantric worship does not cover the entire spectrum of visualizations and underpinning philosophical speculations that make the tantric ritual a perfect whole.

Freeman's theory of "formalized possession" has gained wide currency among western academicians and it has evolved into an independent subject of academic enquiry in cultural anthropology.²¹ But it seems that his arguments have to be reconstructed in a more convincing manner doing full justice to the central tenet and inner dynamics of tantric worship of Kerala brahmins.

Notes

- ¹ See N.P Unni, *Tantra Literature of Kerala*, pp. 365-70 for a detailed account of evolution of temples through successive centuries and a general background of distinguished features of Kerala temple architecture.
- ² Conventionally, it is held that it was Paraśurāma who gave the right to perform prominent rituals in Temple across Kerala. In the historical chronicle *Keralamāhātmya*, which speaks at length about the origin and later phases of Kerala history, it is said that it was sage Paraśurāma who was instrumental in bringing brahmins to Kerala and installing temples at different parts of the land. The verse runs as follows;
uttarādīn dvijānatra godāvaryupasevitān
kalpayāmāsa devānām pūjārtham bhṛgusattamaḥ
tantriṇo dvādaśaśreṣṭhān pratiṣṭhārthamakalpayat
caturvimśa sahasraṃ ca devālayamakalpayat X. p.40.
 See E.V. Rāman Nampūtiri's introduction pp. 64-5 for more details on this.
 It can be seen that this Paraśurāma myth is not only associated with division of priesthood but also with the reason for brahmin settlement in South India in general and Kerala in particular. See Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahmin Settlements in Kerala*, p.4 for more on Paraśurāma myth.
- ³ The number of *parikarmin*-s in a given ritual is decided on the basis of the number of *homa*-s.
evaṃ guruṃ guruniyogakṛto vinītān viprān vidhānakuśalānapi mūrtipālān /
sarveṣvapīḥa caturo dviguṇān vṛṇīta ṣaḍvā tathā svahavanādyanusṛtya kartā
// TS, I. 26. Vivaraṇa: yāvanto adhivāsahomāḥ tāvanto'vaśyaṃ mūrtipāḥ
syuh.
- ⁴ Here the hierarchies existing among the priests who perform occasional rites are taken into consideration. The functions of chief priest (*melśānti*) and junior priests (*kīṣśānti*) are well noted by N.P Unni. See pp. 361-65.
- ⁵ See the dictionary meanings of the word ritual. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: a serious of actions that are always performed in the same way,

especially as a part of religious ceremony. The other meanings are; any practice or pattern of behavior regularly performed in a set manner, (Psychology) any repetitive behavior, such as hand-washing, performed by a person with a compulsive personality disorder.

⁶ This mode of division cannot be seen in any of the texts. More precisely, it can be seen only in vernacular ritual manuals. It is part of oral tradition in which, as a general rule, the learning of rituals starts with simple process to complex ones. So it is not surprising if such division is not given in the texts with clearer boundaries of demarcation.

⁷ The word *dehaśuddhi* is not usually found in the *Āgama*-s. The procedure of ritually purifying the different constituents of body are given in *Āgama*-s as *bhūtaśuddhi* and *ātmaśuddhi*. Interestingly, the two *Śaiva Paddhati* texts found using the word *dehaśuddhi* for purifying subtle bodily elements. The procedure of *ātmaśuddhi* is explained in the fifth chapter (verse 3) of *TS*. It is achieved through *kumbhakaprāṇāyāma*. It is said in the *Vivaraṇa* commentary that the souls are of three kinds *jīva*, *deha* and *jāt*. *trīdhā hyātmāvasthito jīvo deho jātamiti. tatra jīvasya paramātmāpattyā śuddhiḥ, dehasya nityapañcabhūtarūpasya sva sva kāraṇāpattyā, jātasya tu anityapañcabhūtarūpasya śoṣaṇādibhiḥ śuddhiriti vibhāgaḥ*. In the ritual the impurities of both gross (*sthūla*) and subtle (*sūkṣma*) bodies are removed through the re-absorption of *tattva*-s (*tattvalaya*), collapsing (*śoṣaṇa*) and burning (*dahana*). Then new body is created.

⁸ *saṅkalpya sakalīkṛtya dhyātvā piṇḍakalāḥ kramāt / śivabhūtaṃ tathātmānaṃ tataḥ pūjāṃ samārabhet // ŚN.1.72; evaṃ vinyasya dehantu śivo'hamiti bhāvayet / Mātṛsadbhāva, XIVth chapter; Īvaṇṇandevatātmāvāyikkalpayitvā nijāṃ tanum / Puṭayūrbhāṣā, VII. 114; devohamiti sañcintya japedaṣṭāvaram punaḥ / Kriyāsāra, XVIIth paṭala.*

⁹ Here the fourth one *jñānātmā* is not found in the pre-*TS* scriptures namely, *PM*, *Śaivāgamanibandhana*, *Viṣṇusaṃhitā*, *Kriyāsāra*. They refer only to three kinds of souls viz., *ātmā*, *antarātmā* and *paramātmā*. It seems that the fourth one appears for first time in *Pāśupata*.

caturvidhamathātmānaṃ caturmūrti samanvitam / ātmā caivāntarātmā ca paramaṃ jñāna samjñakaṃ //

Then it is seen adopted in all the texts that followed *Pāśupata* namely *TS*, *Kalaśacandrikā*, *Puṭayūrbhāṣā*, *Anuṣṭhāna*-s, etc.

¹⁰ The reason may be that according to vedic ideologies the Sun is door to heaven (also *devayāna*) and once it is crossed no one is subjected to rebirth. Here in this context the *vāsanāśakti*-s are diffused into the disc of Sun so that it will not return to new idol after installation.

¹¹ Though the number and order of *upacāra*-s vary considerably from text to text, the standard as well as minimum number of offering are said to be five. It is closely associated with *pañcamahābhūta*-s. But in the context of Kerala brahmanical rituals the number of *upacāra*-s constitute six and the last one is *naivedya*. So the *upacāra*-s are *jala*, *gandha*, *puṣpa*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa* and *naivedya*. The last one is often replaced by water (*kāraṇajala*) which represents *naivedya*. It may be noted here that the mode of tantric worship in Kerala is often designated to be *jalādijalānta pūjā*.

¹² In the *PM*, *Śaivāgamanibandhana* and *Kriyāsāra* it is called the worship of *śambhupakṣa* and *mūrtipakṣa*. According to *PM*, the *Sadāśiva* is encircled by deities of five circuits (*pañcāvaraṇa*). The first circle consists of the worship five *mūrti*-s beginning with *Īśāna* and *aṅgamantra*-s (*śambhupakṣa*). Then the second circle, called *mūrtipakṣa*, which consists of *Sadyojāta* (west), *Vāmadeva* (south), *Aghora* (north), *Tatpuruṣa* (east) and *Īśāna* (crown). Then the *aṅgamantra* is repeated but this time it is worshipped in four intermediate directions (SE, NE, SW, and NW) and the fifth is on the four directions (*dikṣu*). The third circle is called *vidyeśvarāvaraṇa* which consists the circle of eight *vidyeśvara*-s among them first four are situated in four directions and rest in the intermediate directions. Then the fourth and fifth circles are of *gaṇeśvara*-s and *lokapāla*-s along with their weapons (*āyudha*). But when it comes to *TS* the Śiva is said to have encircled by six circuits. *Īśe ṣaḍāvṛtīriyaṃ parivāraḥkṛtiḥ pañcāvṛtiḥ payasijākṣaṇisumbhahandryoḥ* / VII.78.

¹³ *kāladvayepyutsavanāmadheyam* /
balim gurur bhūtabalim kiredvā //
kālaprakṛtyobhayamācaredvā /
vakṣhye balim bhautikamautsavam ca // *TS*. IX. 14.

- ¹⁴ The *śrībhūtabali* and *utsavabali* starts off with *haviḥpūjā* in which the cooked rice is purified through ritual and then deity is invoked and worshiped into it. Then it is divided into four proportionate rows i.e., three rows vertically and the last one is horizontally. The below given is the model of divisions of cooked rice.

4		
1	2	3

cf. *tridhāsvamūlāṇu samarcitaṃ haviḥ
vibhajya taddaivikamādyamaṃśakam /
sabhūtakūrāvitarāṃśakau kramāt
prakalpayet pāriśadaṃ ca bhautikam // TS. IX.15.*

The extreme left portion (no.1 in the diagram) is called *daivika* which is to be reserved for deities of inner circles beginning with *dvāstha*-s up to *nirmālyadhārin*. The next two portions i.e., no. 2 and 3, are generally called *bhūtakūrahavis* in which the central one is known as *pāriśada* and the next one is *bhūtakūra*. The *bhūtakūra* is a mix of four ingredients. They are '*palalaṃ rajanīcūrṇaṃ salājaṃ dadhi saktukam*' turmeric powder, curd etc.

- ¹⁵ A couple of verses cited by *Vivaraṇakāra* (TS, IX.14) from *Pāśupata* tell the characteristic features of three kinds of *bali*-s in brief. It runs as follows;
*svasthāne devatānāṇca bhūtānānnāmabhiḥ kramāt /
vikīrya balipīṭhe tu baliśeṣaṃ samāpayet //*
*eṣa nityabaliḥ proktastathā pāriśadaiḥ saha /
gaṇebhyo bhūtakūreṇa bāhye bhūtabaliḥ smrṛaḥ //*
*vācayitvā guruḥ svastiṃ kautuke sthāpya śaṅkaram /
sarvopakaraṇaḥ sārddhamutsavākhyam baliṃ haret //*

- ¹⁶ The *Aṣṭabandha* is paste made of eight materials which is used to fix the *bimba* into *pīṭha*.

- ¹⁷ The field studies conducted by Dr. M.V. Vishnu Nampootiri figure top in the lists and are acclaimed as authentic studies on folk lore arts and culture. Some of his writings are directly or indirectly connected with Kerala *tantra* are *Tīyyāṭṭuṃ Ayyappankūttuṃ, Pulluvappāṭṭuṃ Nāgārādhanaṃ* (1977),

Folklore Nighaṇḍu (1989), *Māntrika vidyayam mantravādapporuḷum* (1979) *Teyyam* (1998). and *Māntrika vijñānam* (2012). The works of similar nature namely, *Teyyattile jātivazakkam* (2007) by Dr. Sanjeevevan Azhikkode and *Keraḷattile kāḷīseva* (1959) by Dr. C. Achyutha Menon also provide a broadest context for studying the cultural religious background of Kerala.

¹⁸ He has studied extensively on different aspects of the cultural art form *Teyyam* looked at through anthropological perspectives. His articles related to Kerala *tantra* are: *Purity and Violence: Sacred Power in the Teyyam Worship of Malabar* (1991), *Performing Possession: Ritual and Consciousness in the Teyyam Complex* (1993), *Formalized Possession among the Tantrists and Teyyams of Malabar* (1998), *Dynamics of the Person in the Worship and Sorcery of Malabar* (1999), *Texts, Temples and the Teaching of Tantra in Kerala* (1999), *The Teyyam Tradition of Kerala* (2003), *Untouchable Bodies of Knowledge in the Spirit Possession of Malabar* (2010) and *Pedagogy and Practice: The Meta- pragmatics of Tantric Rites in Kerala* (2011).

¹⁹ *Possession Rites and the Tantric Temple: A Case-Study from Northern Kerala*, p.1.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ See Frederick M. Smith, *Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asia*.



Chapter Four

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON KERALA *TANTRA*

The Kerala tradition of *tantra* can be said mainly as an off-shoot of the *Saiddhāntika-Pāñcarātra* traditions. It also contains elements of beliefs and practices of several other traditions like *smārta* and *paurāṇika*. It is not easy to discern each of these elements because there are many things in common among these traditions. The Kerala tantric system of rituals might have evolved through the process of interaction with brahmanical, non-brahmanical and regional beliefs and practices. As the customs change in course of time, so do the surface structure of rituals. Therefore, to have a complete picture of Kerala *tantra*, these factors should be taken into consideration and analyzed. Unfortunately, no such a study has undertaken so far by any individual or institution.

The studies on Kerala *tantra* can be divided into two categories viz., the studies of academic scholars and the studies of independent scholars. Here the studies of academic scholars mean those research endeavors that are carried out at university level. On the other hand the studies of independent scholars are contributions of independent scholars who may or may not be associated with any particular academic institution or the works prepared by them are not for the fulfillment of any degree. At the outset let us take the studies of independent scholars for discussion.

I) The Studies of Independent Scholars

1) The Contributions of E.V Rāman Nampūtiri

Until E.V Rāman Nampūtiri (1897-1957) wrote a preface to *TS* in 1945¹, there was not a single work exclusively devoted to explore the characteristic features of brahmanical tradition of Kerala *tantra*. There were scholars prior to E.V who attempted to bring to light some of the aspects of Kerala *tantra*. Reference made by E.V to some of the authors and their works sheds some light on the nature of earlier writings. Through his scholarly introduction E.V laid a firm foundation for Kerala *tantra* and has shown new vistas for further studies. Though he was not from a family of traditional *tantrin*-s, he could understand the intricacies of ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra* to great extent and succeeded in conveying them effectively through his writings. It is quite natural that any attempt to bring out an academic study on Kerala *tantra* is supposed to challenge or add further to E.V's findings. But it is not that easy because such a daunting task demands a firm grounding and access to the sources known to E.V. As his writings prove, he was really a man of letters whose areas of interest were multifarious.²

The first part of his introduction to *TS* is woven skillfully by presenting *tantra* in wider context with a view to provide a general

background to a relatively new subject. It can be seen that his access to original sources at that time was very limited. He was writing at a time when tantrism was beginning to attract global attention in a larger scale. The scenario is entirely different at present. There is no dearth of sources for studying any aspect of *tantra* today. Even those manuscripts that are transmitted in a single recension are made available to free download in certain websites and rare books that are digitized from any part of the globe can be read on a personal computer. And every year hundreds of books on *tantra* hit records in global market. Therefore if someone reads his general introduction to tantrism after reading publications of modern scholars, it may seem to be preliminary, devoid of in-depth insight. But we should not forget that it was not the case at the time while he was writing (he wrote almost sixty-seven years ago from now). But his observations in the second part, which deals with all about Kerala *tantra*, still remain unchallenged despite the fact that several studies have been conducted since then. And still it remains an authentic work on Kerala *tantra*. What follows is brief description of the core of his observations. By doing so it is also aimed at providing a general but a solid background of Kerala *tantra*.

E.V. begins with legendary accounts of origin of Kerala as a background of origin of a system of worship in Kerala. For this he relies on three major historical *Kāvya*-s namely, *Keraḷacarita*, *Keraḷamāhātmya* and *Keraḷotpatti*, which narrate the origin of *tantra* in Kerala almost in the same vein. According to the legends it was sage Paraśurāma, who installed 108 temples of Śiva and Durgā in different parts of Kerala as a protection ring. After this deed he entrusted these temples and the priestly rites to Taraṇanallūr family, whose ancestry is traced back to Kanchipuram. All the legends unequivocally attest one point that the Taraṇanallūr family is the earliest and sole authority on customs and religious practices of Kerala temples. The family then distributed rites of conducting major rituals in temples to members of twelve other families. Then it went to a numerous other families.

Following the presentation of these legendary accounts E.V. enlists the major temples of historical importance situated at Tiruvitamkoor (Travancore), Kochi (Cochin) and Malabar. He continues with the enumeration of major and minor deities (*pratiṣṭhāmūrti*) predominantly worshipped across Kerala. Apart from the tantric or purāṇic gods, the names of sages or regional kings installed in some of these temples as minor deities also find entry in this list. Such figures include the

Vedavyāsa (Sree Padmanabhaswami temple, Trivandrum), Paraśurāma (Tiruvalla), Śaṅkarācārya (Aluva) and Ceramān Perumāl (Tiruvanchikkulam). He further notes, besides these temples there are places where the weapons like *khadga* (sword), *śūla* (trident) and *cakra* (discus) are also made object of worship.

It is widely known that Kerala temple structure and temple-oriented religious customs are unique in many respects. Some of such conspicuous features, as noted by E.V., lie in ritual system (*pūjāvidhānaparipāṭī*), daily observances in temples (*nityanidānasampradāya*), the method of sculpting idols (*pratimānirmāṇaśailī*), the extent and intensity of observance of purity and pollution (*śuddhāśuddhavyavasthā*) and discretion of acceptable and non-acceptable objects (*varjyāvarjyaniyama*). These customs and practices are observed principally within the temple complex. The unique external features are said to be the temple construction process (*kṣetranirmāṇarīti*), the temple administrative system (*kṣetrabharāṇavidhaṃ*), ownership (*kṣetrasvāmitvasthiti*), the way of celebrating of seasonal and occasional festivals and use of percussion instruments (*utsavavādyāghoṣaviśeṣaṃ*). Of these, the peculiarities in ritual system include offering a *naivedya* only once to deity. Outside Kerala, the same *naivedya* once offered to a particular deity is offered to

many other deities.³ Daily observances commence with awakening the deity with sounds of musical instruments in the morning and culminate in offering *bali* to retinues of the predominant deity at night. One of the unique observances in temples of Kerala, especially in *Mahākṣetra*-s, is that the daily ritual programme includes worshipping the deity five times in a day. The rituals done at different parts of the day are designated as *Uṣaḥpūjā* (done before sunrise), *Etirttapūjā* (done soon after sunrise), *Pantīraṭippūjā* (done when sun rises twelve feet high), *Uccapūjā* (done at around 12 p.m.) and *Athāzappūjā* (done after sunset).

The scriptures speak of three kinds of temples namely, *drāviḍa*, *nāgara* and *vesara*. Of these *nāgara* style is followed in Kerala. A typical temple complex of Kerala consists of *cuttampalaṁ*, *śrīkovil* (sanctum sanctorum), *maṇḍapaṁ*, *viḷakkumāṭaṁ*, *balikkalpura*, *gopuraṁ*, *koṭi-maraṁ*, *ānakkoṭṭil* and *matil* (fence). In addition to these an *ottampalam* and *kūttampalam* are also seen in some temples. All these may not be present together in all temples alike.

One of the important points missed by E.V is that *pañcaprākāra* division of inner and outer space by which surrounding projections of a temple are divided into five. They are *antarmaṇḍala* (*akattebalivaṭṭaṁ*), *antahāra* (*nālampalaṁ*), *madhyahāra* (*viḷakkumāṭaṁ*) and *bāhyahārā*

(*pradakṣiṇavazī*) *prākāra* (*purammatil*)⁴. This is the general structure of a Kerala temple but there are exceptions. For example; Nagarkovil, Citalal and Kallil temples. These were said to be Jain or Bauddha temples before being converted to Hindu temple.⁵

For the sake of convenience of administration temples are categorized into three. They are *Yatīśvarapradhāna*, *Melāṇmapradhāna* and *Ūrāṇmapradhāna*. Among them the first two categories are said to have initiated by the sage Paraśurāma. E.V does not shed further light on the details on these categories. Instead he recommends reading *Keraḷāvakāśākrama* for further details.⁶

He further postulates on the characteristic features of three prominent traditions of *tantra* in India. Geographically, they are said to have originated in Kashmir, Bengal and Kerala. He goes on saying that among the above geographical divisions of tantrism the first two are said to be adhering to *vāmamārga*, whereas the mode of worship followed in Kerala strictly adhere to the principles of *dakṣiṇamārga*. The defining characteristics of the two streams are, the former is predominantly non-vedic, practiced by the followers of Śaiva and Śākta traditions and dominated by *tamoguṇa*, whereas the latter is predominantly vedic, dominated by *sattvaguṇa* and so forth. While defining the above

characteristics of two streams he further adds the historical evidences suggestive of the existence of *vāmamārga* in the past history of Kerala. It is to be noted that still all these traditions are alive in Kerala and their followers are always cautious to avoid the eyes of public and safeguard their customs from being a topic of discussion. The *dakṣiṇamārga* and *vāmamārga* are not the only two traditions still alive in Kerala. There are followers of *Trika*, *Kaula*, *Krama* streams of Kashmir Śaivism and the growing body of evidences suggests that these traditions were introduced in Kerala during the early period itself.⁷ E.V links the origin of names of two priestly classes namely *aṭikal* and *piṭāranmār* with prevalence of such cultic practices in Kerala.

While dealing with the historical line of tantric preceptors of Kerala, E.V states that there were two kinds of *ācārya*-s in Kerala. They are practitioners (*tantrin*-s) on one hand and the composers of the ritual manuals (*tantragranthakāra*-s) on the other. He makes it clear that the composers could be practitioners as well but not vice versa.

While dealing with the authors and their respective works E.V. places them within broad literary and intellectual cultural context of Kerala. It is particularly the case when he has to decide the date of an author or work. As for the evidences he invariably searches for references

in other literary sources of particular time period. His writings prove his unfailing awareness of history of literary and religious culture of Kerala and accessibility of wide range of resources.

Among the list of practitioners he includes Neṭumbiḷi Taraṇanallūr family as first and forerunner of all other *tantrin*-s of Kerala.⁸ His presentation of the line of authors begins with Nārāṇattubhrānta,⁹ but none of his works survive today. The great *advaita* philosopher Śaṅkara appears next in the list and the authorship of *Prapañcasāra*¹⁰ is attributed to him. The preceptors who appear in his list following Śaṅkara are Bhavatrāta, Ravi- author of *Prayogamañjarī*, Īśānaśivagurudeva- the author of *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*, Vāsudeva- author of *Rahasyagopālatantracintāmañī*, Vilvamaṅgala, Trivikrama, Nārāyaṇācārya, Rāghavānanda, Mādhava and Vāsudeva. These authors appear in the list of pre-*TS* authors. The post-*TS* authors and works are as given below.

The Post-*TS* Authors and their Works

No.	Authors	Works
1	Kainikkara Kṛṣṇan Nampūtirippāḍu (Disciple of Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri)	<i>Vivaraṇa</i> commentary

2	Cennas Śaṅkaran Nam- pūtiripāḍu (Son and disciple of Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri)	<i>Vimarśinī</i> commentary
3	Parameśvaran Nampūtiri	<i>Parameśvarānuṣṭhānam or Anuṣṭhānapaddhati</i>
4	Karuttapārā Nampūtiri (Kṛṣṇapāśānavipra)- (Disciple of Kainikkara Kṛṣṇan Nampūtiripāḍu)	<i>Karuttapārānuṣṭhānam or Anuṣṭhānaṃ or Tāntrikakriyā</i>
5	Tozuvānūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri (disciple of Kainikkara Kṛṣṇan Nampūtirippāḍu)	1) <i>Tozānūranuṣṭhānam or Anuṣṭhānasamuccayam,</i> 2) <i>Tantraprāyaścittam</i>
6	Puliyannūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtirippāḍu (Disciple of Cennas Śaṅkaran Nampūtirippāḍu)	1) <i>Hārīṇī</i> comm. on <i>Viṣṇusamhitā</i> , 2) <i>Kriyāsāavyākhyā</i> 3) <i>Kriyāśrayam</i> 4) <i>Vaiṣṇavanavīkaraṇam</i>
7	Nāgasvāmi Nampūtiri	<i>Tattvadīpikā</i> comm.on <i>Viṣṇusamhitā</i>
8	Vāsudevan Nampūtiri	<i>Śivacandrikā</i>
9	Kuzikkāṭṭu Śaṅkaran Bhaṭṭatiri	1) <i>Vaiṣṇavānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅ- graham</i> 2) <i>Kriyāsaṅgraham</i>
10	Kuzikkāṭṭu Bhaṭṭatiri	<i>Skandānuṣṭhānasaṅgraham</i>
11	Kuberaṇ Nampūtiri	<i>Śrīkṛṣṇatantram</i>
12	Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri	<i>Bhadrādīpadīpikā</i>
13	Subrahmaṇyan Nampūtiri	<i>Tantrasāra</i>

14	Govindan Nampūtiri	<i>Prayogasāra</i>
15	Kuzikkāṭṭu Bhaṭṭatiri	<i>Nṛttaraṅgajīrṇoddhārakrama</i>
16	Nīlakaṇṭhan Nampūtiri	<i>Kriyāleśasmṛti</i>
17	PoṭavūrVāsudevan Nampūtiri	<i>Puṭayūrbhāṣā</i> or <i>Kriyākramam</i> or <i>Kramadīpikā</i>
18	Kuzikkāṭṭu Bhaṭṭatiri	<i>Kuzikkāṭṭubhāṣā / pacca</i>
19	Kuzikkāṭṭu Maheśvaran Bhaṭṭatiri	Malayalam commentaries on <i>Tantrasamuccayam</i> and <i>Śeṣasamuccayam</i>

(Table: IV. 1)

Subsequently, he enumerates numerous works of unknown authorship.¹¹ Then he recapitulates all the scholarly arguments on the interpretation of the word phrase "*kalyabdeṣvatiyatsu nandanayane-ṣvambhodhi saṅkhyeṣu yaḥ*" which appears in the twelfth chapter (verse 215) of the *TS*. Almost all the scholars agree that it suggests a time either of the author or its composition. According to M.M. Gaṇapati Śāstri it denotes the time of birth of the author whereas the well-known academicians of previous generations like C. Kunjan Raja and K. Kunjunni Raja were of the opinion that it suggests the date of *TS*'s composition. Between these opposing poles, E.V stood with the former view that the author was referring to his date of birth. In order to establish his point and to refute the arguments of other scholars with substantial evidences he puts forth all available textual evidences. To this end first he

refers to a Malayalam article entitled "*oru vayodhikante dayari*" appeared in *Maṅgaḷodaya* in 1916. The article suggested that the dubious verse refers to the date of its author's birth. The second evidence is gleaned from Vaṭakkumkūr's magnum opus *Keralīya Samskr̥ta Sāhitya Caritram* (KSSC). The celebrated commentators of *TS* (including the Malayalam commentator Kuzikkāṭṭu Maheśvaran Bhaṭṭatiri) also agree on the fact that it suggests author's date of birth.

Remarkably, he devotes considerable space to discuss the poetic merits of the *TS*. Here he goes on even to the extent of recommending it to those who learn *Kāvya*-s in order to have command over Sanskrit language. Since later part of his observations finds special consideration in the forthcoming chapters, they are not discussed here. To conclude, no serious study of that magnitude has been undertaken since then.

2) The Contributions of N.P Unni

E.V's ideas are further expanded by N.P. Unni through his works on Kerala *tantra*. Though E.V. has gone much deep into the field, his views are not well appreciated outside Kerala due to language barrier. Whereas, N.P. Unni could present his views in English, his works are known at international level. In a sense his writings on Kerala *tantra* are exact translations or expansion of what has been written by E.V. almost

six decades ago. This is not to underestimate N.P Unni's contributions, but he has made his own contributions to the field.

His writings include introduction to *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*,¹² the same has later been published as an independent book titled "*Tantrapaddhati- A Study*"¹³, "*Tantrasamuccaya of Nārāyaṇa with Vimarśinī commentary of Śaṅkara*"¹⁴ and "*Viṣṇusaṃhitā of Sumati*".¹⁵ One of his monumental works on the subject is his recent book called "*Tantra Literature of Kerala*"¹⁶, in which he provides chronology and other details of available manuscripts of Kerala *tantra*.

In his introduction to former three works he attempted to introduce the summary of the contents of each chapter in English. It is much useful for those who are not aware of these texts as well as those who always seek to have an English translation of Sanskrit books. In order to distinguish his own contributions someone has to go through pages of the *Tantra Literature of Kerala*.

The book is divided into two parts, in which first part deals with the major works on Kerala *tantra*. Though the works mentioned cannot be said to have arranged in a chronological order, he provides all the necessary details of forty-one works noted down from respective

manuscripts or manuscript catalogues. The details of works newly added by N.P. Unni to the list already prepared by E.V are *Gopālānuṣṭhānakrama* of Kṛṣṇalīlāśuka, *Anuṣṭhānapaddhati* of Vāsudevāsomayāji, *Tantrasārasaṅgraha* of Nārāyaṇa, *Tantrasārasaṅgrahavyākhyā* *Mantravimarśinī* of Vāsudeva, *Prayogasāravvyākhyā*, *Sarvāṅgasundarī*, *Cakrahomakalpa- Manoramā*, *Tantrarājavvyākhyā* of Subhagānanda, *Nṛttaraṅganavīkaraṇavyākhyā* of anonymous author, *Mantrasāra* of Śaṅkara and *Durgānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅgraha* of anonymous author.

The second part, titled 'Precepts and Practices' deals with general characteristics of Kerala *tantra*. It also includes topics ranging from unique features of Kerala temple architecture to temple administration. Even if his ignorance of intricacies of tantric rituals and practices reflects in the book, there is no other book of its kind in English. And what is striking frequently while reading his introductions is that he seems not to be aware of standard technical terms for many Sanskrit words that are widely used by Indian and international scholars on tantrism.¹⁷ The additional details provided in the second part of the book will be much useful for someone who is looking for other distinguishing features of Kerala *tantra*.¹⁸ And at the end the details of unpublished manuscripts

available in The Curator's Office Library, Trivandrum and The H.H. Maharaja's Library, Trivandrum are also given.

3) The Contributions of S.A.S Sarma

S.A.S Sarma's¹⁹ articles on different aspects of Kerala *tantra* can be distinguished from others for his background and practical knowledge of *Siddhāntāgama-s* and *Bhairavāgama-s*. Moreover, his association with great intellectuals of the field enabled him going further into the subject and locating Kerala *tantra* within a broad context. This firm footing also equipped him to approach Kerala *tantra* from a different angle, which the other authors have lost sight of.

Summary of a couple of his writings are given below. Some of his observations throw fresh light on the subject.

In the *Manuṣyālayacandrikā* of Nīlakaṇṭha (a treatise on architect) refers to earlier sources that he has consulted while composing it. These texts referred to are of particular importance since they constitute some of the pre-*TS* works. This reference helps us to great extent to solve the confusion prevailing over the pre-*TS* sources. The verse is as following;

mayamatayugaḷaṃ prayogamañja-

ryapi ca nibandhanabhāskarīyayugmaṃ /

manumatagurudevapaddhatiśrī-

hariyaṇādimahāgamā jayanti // I.7

mārkaṇḍeyayugaṃ parāśaramurāriproktaratnāvalī-

sārāṇ kāśyapaviśvakarmamatayugmādyam kumārāgamaṃ /

savyākhyāṃ harisaṃhitāṃ vivaraṇākhyāṃvāstuvidyāṇ

dr̥ṣṭvā tantrasamuccayoktamanusṛtyaivātrasaṅkṣipyate // I.8

Through the article "*Mayamatayugaḷam a Usage in the Manuṣyālayacandrikā of Nīlakaṇṭha* (late 15th century A.D); *Are there two works of Maya?*" S.A.S Sarma tries to identify the two works referred to by the word '*Mayamatayugaḷam*'. It can be inferred that the one of it implies to the popular work on architecture called "*Mayamataṃ*". But the question is which could be the other one? Here Sarma proposes that the other one could be '*Mayasaṅgraha*' of which the sole surviving manuscript (incomplete) is available in Kathmandu. He further tries to trace the references made by other authors to the *Maysaṅgraha*. It is found that the work has been referred to often simply as '*Maya*' and considered to be an authority by Kṣemarāja in *Stavacintāmaṇi*, Jayaratha in *Tantrālokaviveka*, Bhaṭṭotpala in *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, Hemādri in *Vratakhanda* of *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* and Somaśambhu in *Karmakāṇḍakramāvalī*.

After scrutinizing all the evidences to establish that '*Mayasaṅgraha*' is the other work mentioned by author, Sarma enlists the other works and also looks into how Ullūr and Vaṭakkumkūr understood them. At places he differs from both and suggests the alternative possibilities. It would be useful enlisting the works mentioned by the author in this context.²⁰ They are *Prayogamañjarī*, *Śaivāgamanibandhana*, *Bhāskarīya* (*nibandhana-bhāskarīyayugmaṃ*), *Manumatam*, *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*, *Mārkaṇḍeyanibandhana* (*mārkaṇḍeyayugmaṃ*) , *Parāśaramata*, *Ratnāvalī* (*murārīproktaratnāvalīsāra*), *Kumārāgamam*, *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* with commentary (*savyākhyā harisaṃhitā*), *Vāstuvidyā* (*vivaraṇākhyam vāstuvidyā*), *Tantrasamuccaya* and *Pañcāśikā*. The importance of the given list of works lies in the fact that they shed some fresh light on the early tantric works and works on architecture as well.

His other article on Kerala *tantra*, titled ' *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*', is an attempt to provide "a broad idea about the different manuals related to Śaiva worship written in Kerala between the tenth and fifteenth centuries."²¹ It also tries to compare the approaches of these authors on *dīkṣā* (initiation) and draws attention to present day scenario.

He observes that the *PM* follows the lead of the *Kāḷottara* tradition but at the same time quite different from the *Paddhati*-s of Somaśambhu,

Aghoraśiva, and Jñānaśiva.²² Never in the history had any of the writers on Kerala *tantra* seemed to have taken pain to relate the content and metaphysical underpinning of Kerala ritual manuals with that of *Saiddhāntika* sources. Sarma has gone a step further in this regard.

The next work examined by him is *Śaivāgamanibandhana* which, according to him, unlike *PM*, does not mix *dīkṣā* with *pratiṣṭhā*.²³ According to latter, initiation is the necessary precondition to perform installation rituals.

While dealing with *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati* (*ĪŚGP*), he provides all the necessary information which supports the hypothesis that the author of the text was a Keralite. Though many of these evidences are already pointed out by previous scholars, Sarma adds two more evidences in this direction. He observes:

It is to be noted that when many of the early śaivasiddhāntas (up to 1157 A.D., the floruit [flourish] of Aghoraśiva) quote a Maya, they refer not to the Mayamata but to a different treatise called the Mayasaṅgraha. But *Īśāna*[śiva]gurudevapaddhati, however, while it quotes several saiddhāntika works in different parts of the text, it only refers to the Mayamata and not to the Mayasaṅgraha as in the other śaivasiddhānta texts from other

parts of India. So if we assign the authorship of Mayamata to a Keralite, then this too provides one more argument for confirming that the *Īśāna[śiva]gurudevapaddhati* has been written in Kerala. It may be added here that manuscripts of a text named the *Khāḍgarāvaṇacarita*, which has been quoted in the *Īśāna[śiva]gurudevapaddhati*, are to be found in Kerala.²⁴

4) The Contributions of Palakkal Madhavan (Madhavji)

All the aforesaid scholarly observations revolve around the characteristic features of temple observances and the distinct nature of Kerala temple construction. But none of them could satisfy the quest of a class of people who needs to have philosophical interpretations of temple observances and customs. This quest for finding the philosophical significance of temple practices and rituals is well addressed by Palakkal Madhavji in his magnum opus "*Kṣetracaitanyarahasyam*". Madhavji (1926-1988) was well known social activist and reformer who joined the RSS during the first half of the twentieth century and became a full time Pracharak from 1946 onwards. Meanwhile he got initiated into *Śrīvidyā* cult by Paḷḷattu Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri. As a full time activist he was able to travel all length and breadth of Kerala, which helped him to get a clearer picture of the cultural history of the state. His deep knowledge and

insight into traditional literature including tantrism made him popular figure in Kerala during that time and an unquestionable authority on tantric matters.

As the title suggests the "*Kṣetracaitanyarahasyam*" is an effort to unfold the secrets that empower and sustain temples as an influential religious center. His effort to interpret all the temple-oriented observances from a philosophical point of view was well recognized by traditional practitioners and scholars alike. And still it continues to influence the religious life of larger Hindu community in Kerala.

The book contains eighteen chapters covering wide spectrum of topics ranging from vedic root of tantric practices to the details on visualizations (*dhyānaśloka*-s) of the deities prescribed in *TS*. The central theme of his observations is that every ritual has a philosophical significance and more than an abstract concept these practices have an experiential level. He invariably stressed on this experiential aspect of rituals. He attributes that all such experiences are akin to the mystical experiences of an accomplished 'Yogin' who has awakened the "power of *Kuṇḍalinī* (*Kuṇḍalinī Śakti*)" through rigorous yogic practices. He could convincingly establish that all religious experiences that result from tantric ritual practices have to be seen as an aftermath of the rise of

"*Kuṇḍalinī*". And everything related to religious observances in temples can be interpreted from this background. The influence of this new interpretation of observances can be found in writings of all later pro-Hindu authors.

5) The Contributions of Traditional Tantric Scholars

It is a fact that the approach of someone who looks at the inner mechanisms of a tradition from outside and someone who looks at the same from within, will often does not meet. The "outsider" may not be able to see the intricacies and secret layers lying deep inside a tradition. Similarly, an "insider" may not be able to break the confinements and to maintain an objective standpoint. But for someone who set out to grasp the tradition in its depth and breadth the wisdom of both are inevitable. Gavin Flood observes the tension existing between internalist and externalist view of a tradition as following:

There is tension between an externalist understanding that would analyze tradition in terms of history and the way a tradition is constructed in a particular historical circumstance and the indigenous, the essentialist understanding of tradition as stemming from a timeless source. This is a large issue and the problem of externalist and internalist discourse is as relevant to

Hindu traditions as to Christianity or Islam. While the indigenous view of tradition is clearly legitimate from insider's perspective and important more generally, it is often challenged by historical, philological scholarship. Certainly living traditions can accept and absorb findings of philosophical scholarship (as Christianity has done) and externalist accounts can function as corrective readings of tradition: text-historical accounts are not necessarily incompatible with religious account of revelation.²⁵

There are only a few practicing *tantrin*-s concerned about providing a new dimension to their traditional beliefs and practices through writings. Even then, their writings provide us with an insider view which may not be necessarily recorded in the texts of a tradition. K.P.C Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiripāḍu, K.P.C. Anujan Nampūtiripāḍu and Taraṇanallūr Padmanābhan Nampūtiripāḍu belong to this category of *tantrin*-s.

A collection of thirty-eight articles of K.P.C Narayanan Nampūtiripāḍu has been published under the title "*Tiraññeṭutta lekhanāññal*" by Panchangam Books in 2007. He was born in the family of great *tantrin*-s Kunnattūr Paṭiññāreḍattu Manaykkal situated at Peruvanam villegge, Trīśśūr and served as a Sanskrit Teacher in Cherpu C.N.N High School. He is considered to be a living authority on *tantra* at

present across Kerala. Out of thirty-eight articles, which cover a wide range of topics from *tantra* to an anecdote on history and working principles of *Yogakshemasabha*, first five are directly related to Kerala *tantra*.

The first article in the book '*navīkaraṇakalaśa*' is a general account of the constituent rituals of renovation of temple in general or *bimba* (idol) in particular. In the second article entitled '*dravyakalaśabhāvana*' he tries to identify the positioning and organization of *brahmakalaśa*-s and *parikalaśa*-s (pots) in renovation rituals with planets of the Milky Way. It in turn represents the *brahmāṇḍa* (cosmos). In the next article on '*utsava*' he observes that generally the beginning is marked by raising the flag (*dhvajādi*). But there are two more ways of marking the beginning of *utsava*. They are '*aṅkurādi*' (starting with sowing the seed) and '*paṭahādi*' (starting with playing the percussion instruments). He further notes that the well known seasonal festivals (*pūram*) at '*Ārāṭṭupuzā* and '*Trīśśūr*' temples usually begins with '*paṭahādi*'.²⁶ His main hypothesis is that structurally temple resembles sacrificial altar (*yāgavedi*) and worship in temple in many ways is similar to rituals of sacrifices. The resemblance between temple layout and sacrificial altar has already been noted by several scholars. In the article entitled '*kṣetravum yāgaśālayum*' K.P.C

points out most of obvious similarities in the structure and ritual. The similarities noted by him can be illustrated as following.

The Sacrificial Altar and Temple

<i>yāgaśālā</i> (Sacrificial Altar)		<i>kṣetram</i> (Temple)
<i>Yajñakuṇḍa</i>	=	<i>Śrīkovil</i>
<i>Brāhmaṇasadaḥ</i>	=	<i>Maṇḍapa</i>
<i>Daśapadaśthāna</i>	=	<i>Valiyabalikkal</i>
<i>Yūpa</i>	=	<i>Dhvaja</i>

(Table: IV. 2)

The offerings made in the sacrifice into three altars are of varying shapes namely, square, circular and semi-circular (*ardhacandrākṛti*). Similarly, there are numerous temples across Kerala in any of these three shapes. Though the purpose of *yūpa* is to tie the sacrificial animal to it, functionally *dhvaja* (flag staff) is not a parallel to *yūpa*. But the topmost part of *dhvaja* is occupied by the vehicle of the presiding deity in temples.²⁷ The vehicle in most cases will be an animal.

The most important of his observations is the similarity between sacrificial fire and the idol. He observes that the idol is equated with *vitānāgni* in *Viṣṇusaṃhitā*. It has to be noted here that the idol is

visualized as a blazing fire while offering *naivedya* to the deity in worship.²⁸

In short, he postulates that the temple may be considered as a replica of sacrificial altar, sanctum sanctorum of fire altar (*kuṇḍa*), idol of sacrificial fire (*yāgāgni*), *maṇḍapa* of *brāhmaṇasadas*, *valiyabalikkal* of *daśapada* and *dhvaja* of *yūpa*.²⁹

II) The Studies of Academic Scholars

Later studies, academic works in particular, were carried out thoroughly following the footsteps of these two authors i.e., E.V. and N.P. Unni. So far there are four Research theses written on the subject and they are mainly concerned with exploring the certain aspects of particular text or texts. The major academic studies are as following.

1) *Temple Architecture and Rituals of Kerala- A Study with Special Reference to Tantrasamuccaya*- Jayan Erancherry.

The first attempt in this direction is made by Erancherry Jayan, Associate Professor, V.T.B. College, Palakkad, whose study³⁰ mainly focuses on dual aspects of Kerala *tantra* viz., architectural and ritual. It is true that these are the defining characteristics of Kerala *tantra*, but the

scholar seems to have relied much on to his traditional wisdom rather than on the textual analysis.

The second and third chapters, followed by a general introduction cover different aspects of temple architecture, and methods and measurements of sculpting an idol (*bimba*) as given in *TS*. The emphasis of fourth and fifth chapters is on rituals of Kerala temples and other kinds of rituals prevalent in Kerala.

2) *Prayogamañjarī of Ravi: A Critical Study*- K.M. Sangamesan.

This is the second study based on a specific ritual manual of Kerala done by Sangamesan, Reader, Department of Sanskrit Sahitya, SSUS, Kalady.³¹ It is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction to Tantrism and some of prominent scriptural divisions. In the second half of the same chapter the tantric literature of Kerala is enumerated with all available details. The sources profusely made use of by the scholar appear to be the works of E.V, N.P Unni, Venkitasubrohmānīa Iyer and Manuscript catalogues of Oriental Manuscript Library, Trivandrum. In addition to these he has also taken pain to collect maximum details from private manuscript collections especially from Iruveśi Puṭayūr. Here the scholar claims to have found out and included a hitherto unknown work on Kerala *tantra*, called

Śaivāgamanibandhana (*ŚN*) for the first time in an academic work. Instead of presenting details of contents of each chapter, it may suffice to note some of the important points noted by the scholar.

One of the remarkable attempts made by him is to fill the missing words or lines of *PM* by comparing published version of it with other manuscripts. He seems to have succeeded in finding missed portions of the *PM* and make it complete whole. As proposed by the scholar he has dissected the text into all possible pieces and critically analyzed it to the best of his experience and knowledge. But someone who is expert in the rituals will never be able to agree on a couple of statements made by him. The first one is, in the context of performance of *rākṣoghnaḥoma*, he points out, *Yajurvedin*-s do not usually mix *apāmārga* and *bhasma* at the end. And also *Yajurvedin*-s do not offer *bali* in its culmination point. These two statements do not have support of textual or oral traditions.

It is he who first put forth the idea that there are many similarities between *ŚN* and *PM*. That, there are several parallel verses in both texts, makes the things further complicated as to whether *ŚN* predates *PM* or vice versa. But the scholar tends to assume that *PM* pre-dates *ŚN*.³²

Though Sangamesan has tried to analyze the text critically from several standpoints, he is never found to have attempted to trace its source to the *Saiddhāntika* tradition.

3) *Gods and Worship in Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*- Prajith J.P.

Another study, that has been carried out in this line is also based on a particular ritual manual. The main focus of Prajith J.P's study entitled "*Gods and Worship in Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*" is on identifying the entire major and minor gods and their different manifestations as well as their worship as prescribed in the *ĪŚGP* of Īśānaśivagurudeva.³³ He also seems to have relied much upon the findings of early authors especially E.V and N.P Unni. As is acknowledged by the scholar in his preface, he sought help of a traditional scholar cum practitioner for entering into the relatively less known and complex subject. A study on *Paddhati* text necessarily presupposes thorough knowledge of the *Saiddhāntika* sources in general and *Paddhati* texts in particular.

In the first chapter of the study titled 'History and Scope of Tantric Literature' he identifies the three important periods in the history of composition of Kerala *tantra* literature viz., (i) the period up to Nārāṇattubhrāntan, (ii) from then to *TS* and (iii) post-*TS* period. It presupposes that Nārāṇattubhrāntan is the early known preceptor who

had been instrumental in evolving Kerala *tantra* into a unique system. But there are no clear historical evidences yet to substantiate this point. So long as it cannot be proved this remains a mere speculation. And later two periods in the history of Kerala *tantra* is already identified by early scholars long before. After all, he does not provide a convincing explanation as to how he has arrived at the conclusion.

One of the interesting points is that the attempt made by him to compare two different texts i.e., *ĪśGP* and *Śāradātilaka*, belonging to two different genres. He notes all the similarities between them in detail.³⁴

Even if he mentions eighteen traditional *Paddhatikāra*-s in the initial chapters, no attempt is made in the following chapters to compare *ĪśGP* with the works of those *Paddhatikāra*-s. It would have been certainly rewarding had he done so because the importance of a text within a genre can be identified only through a comparison.

4) *Iconography in Prayogamañjarī and Śaivāgamanibandhana*- Suthashi. R.

It is the next academic study carried out in this field followed by Prajith's.³⁵ As the title suggests the emphasis is laid on identifying the similarities and contrasts in the presentation of iconographic details

between the *ŚN* and *PM*. Particular emphasis is laid on exploring the unique iconographic measurements and allied features prescribed for sculpting '*Śivaliṅga*' in both texts.

These are the major scholarly attempts to bring to light the significant aspects of brahmanical tradition of Kerala *tantra* for last five or six decades. But these studies will not provide a relatively comprehensive picture of internal and external mechanism of temple rituals across Kerala. To this we have to add the contributions made in this direction by scholars of other disciplines like cultural studies, history, folk lore studies, Governmental records and works of general writers of customs and practices of Kerala. The subject 'Kerala *tantra*' can be looked at through different lenses from different angles. Eventually, the pictures we get also vary considerably from each other. But in fact not many studies have been done on the field and it still remains a less explored area. The studies that have been done so far mainly focus on the extent of incorporation of folk cult into brahmanical tantric traditions and vice versa; and the cultural background of Kerala before and after the Brahmin settlement. The works of Dr. M.V. Vishnu Nampoothiri, M.G Sashibhoosan, Rich Freeman, Sarah Caldwell etc. are of great value as they are mainly concerned about folk traditions of religious observances. In the cultural expressions of

marginalized social groups, elements of tantric ideologies and practices can be identified. And studies of such magnitude will help us to trace the folk-root of some of the persisting religious practices.

The proliferation of temples across Kerala is linked with the spread of brahmin settlements and a power political system, which invariably fulfilled the ambitions of higher castes alone. The historical background and impact of brahmin settlements is the core area of investigation of historians like Kesavan Veluthat, M.G.S Narayanan etc. Works of these authors provide a firm historical and cultural background of Kerala and its early systems of administration centered on temples. While discussing temples and customs the remarkable attempt made by S. Jayasankar cannot be left unnoticed. In the voluminous work he provides the historical background and customs and practices of temples of 14 districts of Kerala. For this purpose he has examined all the governmental official records and explored conventional beliefs revolving around specific temples.

●

Notes

- ¹ N.P Unni provides the publication details." The work was also edited in the Trivandrum Malayalam Series in three parts with a Malayalam commentary by Kuzikkāṭṭu Maheśvaran Bhaṭṭatiri. Part I issued as TMS 64 in the year 1941 contained paṭala-s 1 to 4 and was edited by Dr. L.A. Ravivarma. The same editor brought out part II issued as TMS 66 in 1942 containing paṭalas 5 to 8. Part III consisting of paṭalas 9 to 12 was edited by Prof. V.A. Ramaswami Sastri as TMS 68 in 1945. Third part contains a lengthy and useful introduction contributed by E.V. Raman Nampūtiri, who worked as a pandit in the Library. The edition contains Sanskrit text in Malayalam script along with the Malayalam commentary." *ibid.*, p.254.
- ² Recently complete writings of E.V is published by Panchangam Book Stall, Kunnankulam under the head "*Smṛṭikalika*". It consists of 17 articles on wide range of topics.
- ³ Though there is no textual sanction for it, it is widely practiced by Tamil Brahmins even today.
- ⁴ The exact measurements and location of *pañcaprākāra*-s are given in *TS* as;
daṇḍerddhe'ntargataṃ maṇḍalamavanimite'rddhānvite vāntahārā
dossañkhye maddhyahārā jaladhiparimite bāhyahārādrisañkhye /
maryādā mūladhāmnaḥ prathamacaramavarjaṃ mukhāyāmayuktāḥ
prākārāḥ pañcakāryāḥ syuriha caramasīmaikaviṃśe'pi vā syāt // II. 73.
Vimarśinī- *pañcaprākārāṇāṃ vibhāgamāha- daṇḍerddhaiti / mūladhāmno*
mūlaprāsādādarddhe daṇḍe gate sati / antargataṃ maṇḍalamaṣṭamūrtīnāṃ
sthānaṃ syāt/ avanimite ekadaṇḍe / ardhānvite sārdaikadaṇḍe vā antahārā
syāt / dossañkhye dvidaṇḍe madhyahārā / jaladhiparimite caturdaṇḍe
bāhyahārā / adrisañkhye saptadaṇḍe maryādā ca / iha caramasīmā
mahāmaryādā / sā'pi ekaviṃśe daṇḍe vā syāt / ete pañcaprakārāḥ
prathamacaramavarjjaṃ prathamamantargatamaṇḍalaṃ caramaṃ
mahāmaryādāṃ ca varjayitvā mukhāyāmayuktāḥ kāryāḥsyuḥ [. .].
- ⁵ In his recent book entitled "*Keraḷīyata: Caritramānaññal*" M.R. Raghava Warriar points out the details and historical significance of all Jain influenced centers and temples in Kerala. To mention names of a few early Jain temples Tiruccāraṇaṃ kṣetram (Tiruvitamkoor), Kallilguhākṣetram (Perumbavoor),

Kiṇaloor (Balussery), Janārdanakṣetram (Wayanad) and Paruvassery Palli Bhagavatikṣetram. See pp.63-95.

- ⁶ In this context mention may be made to rules and regulations of rites of *avarodha* in practice in Vaṭakkunnātha temple, Trissur. It is a *Yati* (equal to *Yogātiri*) who recommends the regional ruler to consecrate one of new members of Puliyanloor Mana as a *tantrin*, only after which he is entitled to perform the rituals in Vaṭakkunnātha temple.
- ⁷ Historically it is not proven yet when these Śaiva and Śākta cults of Kashmir made their way to Kerala. Nevertheless, Śāktism has strong roots in Kerala which gained currency among high castes and ruling communities around early medieval periods onwards. Through the process of cultural-integration, there emerged an independent but modified systems of worship of goddesses of Śrīvidyā cult of Kerala.
- ⁸ He enlists the names some of well known *tantrin*-s as *Maṇalikkarapporri*, *Kūkkarapporri*, *Kuḷakkaḍappaṇḍārattil*, *Tāzamaṇporri*, *Kuzikkāṭṭubhaṭṭatiri*, *Parambūr bhaṭṭatiri*, *Kaṭiyakkol nampūtiri*, *Manayattāttunampūtiri*, *Puliyannūr nampūtiri*, *Iṭappaḷḷi nampūtiri*, *Kainikkara nampūtiri*, *Vembilīyattu nampūtiri*, *Kūrālakkāṭṭu nampūtiri*, *Marrappiḷḷi nampūtiri*, *Kunnattubhaṭṭatiri*, *Cennas nampūtirippāḍu*, *Kallūr nampūtirippāḍu*, *Kāṭṭumāṭassu nampūtiri*, *Pāmbummeykkāṭṭu nampūtiri*, *Aṇḍalāḍi nampūtirippāḍu*, *Śrīdharañceṭattu nampūtiri*, *Kāmbbrattu nampūtiri* and *Poṭayūr nampūtirippāḍu*.
- ⁹ *bhrānta* in Malayalam means lunatic but his extraordinary deeds are narrated of highly evolved beings. Since there are not much written records that clearly suggest his association with ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra*, it may appear to be an attempt to stretch the origin of Kerala *tantra* far back to time of *Paṇḍitpettapantirukula*.
- ¹⁰ It is text with no direct link with temple customs of Kerala. It is highly influential; for its systems of worship and set of pantheons are still applied in the *mantravāda* tradition of Kerala.
- ¹¹ To this category he adds the works like *Āvahanṭīvyākhyā*, *Upahāraprakāśikā* (*Upahāraprakāśikā* is just one of the commentaries of *Saparyāsaptaka*) and its commentaries, *Sambandhokti*-commentary of *Saparyāsaptaka*, *Kriyāsāṅgraha* (not of Kuzikkāṭṭu), *Kriyāsāra* (it is confirmed that its author is a Ravi),

Jīrṇoddhāra, Tantranirṇaya, Dhvajapraṭiṣṭhā, Kṣetrapālajīrṇoddhāra, Tantrasiddhi, Tantrānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅgraha, Tantrānuṣṭhānakrama, Dvādaśyārādhana, Prayogaratnamālā, Daurgānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅgraha, Nārāyaṇātmaka, Kaumārabali, Kālītantra, Praṭiṣṭhābimbaliakṣaṇa, Brahmatāntrika, BhakticintāmaṇI, Bhadrādīpakriyā, Maṇḍalacatuṣkalakṣaṇa, Mahāgaṇapatikalpa, Mahāsammohanatantra, Māṭṛsadbhāva, Balikalpa, Kukkuṭakalpa, Vijayabalikalpa, Skandasadbhāva, Sārasamuccaya and Vaiṣṇavadhyānapūjādi.

¹² Published by New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, First edition 1987, Second edition 1990, Revised edition, New Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, Delhi, 1995.

¹³ Published by Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 1987.

¹⁴ Published by Nag Publishers, Delhi, First edition 1990, Second edition 1991.

¹⁵ Published by Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1991.

¹⁶ Published by New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2006.

¹⁷ For example see the verses of 11th chapter of *Viṣṇusamhitā* and his interpretation of those lines English.

atha vakṣyāmi saṅkṣepāt dīkṣitasyābhiṣecanam /

putrako deśiko vāpi yenācāryatvamṛcchati // 1 //

prathamam samaye dīkṣā tantrajñāne tatorcane /

tisro hyetāḥ prayoktavyā dīkṣā dharma vivṛdhaye // 2 //

ālikya maṇḍalaṃ pūrvaṃ parivāra samāyutam /

darśayecchiṣyamācāryo yamasau samayī smṛtaḥ //3// His translation of these

verses is as following; "Now I shall deal with the coronation of the disciple undergoing the vow or training. This is essential to confer the status of a teacher to the disciple which enables him in turn to train others. The vow is to be taken on three aspects. First is on the conventions of particular sect, viz., Vaiṣṇavism. The second is regarding the knowledge of Tantrik aspects relating to Viṣṇu and the third is with regard to the modes of worship. Writing the diagram on the ground the teacher trains the disciple on the principles in the first mode mentioned above." pp. 43-4. Someone who is very familiar with *Samhitā* texts could attribute the meanings of the verses into N.P Unni's interpretation. But for others it just gives a vague idea of the ritual in question

and it is far away from intention of Sanskrit verses. There are many such instances of such vagueness in interpretation and this is just one of many.

¹⁸ The topics that constitute the second part are *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* on Kerala Temples, Temple Priests, Temple Architecture, *Jīrṇoddhāra*, *Kūttampalam*-the Temple Theatre, Temples with Special Feature, Administration of Temples.

¹⁹ He is a Research Fellow at the Pondicherry Centre of the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFO).

²⁰ See the diagram drawn by Sarma, p.5.

²¹ IndologicaTaurinensia: Official Organ of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies, Vol. XXXV, 2009, p.320.

²² *ibid.*, p.323; It has been observed by Alexis Sanderson that the *Paddhati* texts thoroughly follow the *Kālottara* tradition.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 327.

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp.328-29.

²⁵ *The Śaiva Traditions*, The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism, p.201.

²⁶ p.8.

²⁷ As was well observed by Stella Kramrisch, though there are several structural similarities between temple layout and sacrificial altar, there are many things that can not taken as an exact borrowing of sacrificial altar layout, particularly at conceptual level. For instance the *yūpa* serves a particular purpose in sacrificial cult whereas, the *dhvaja* which is attributed to be a replica of *yūpa* functions in an entirely different way in Temple concept. For example; as Francesco Brighenti demonstrates substantially one of the functions of *yūpa* in *Vājapeya* sacrifice in a different context; There is a vedic rite called *yūpārohaṇa* (ascent of the sacrificial post), part of the *śrauta* ritual *Vājapeya* (drink of strength), where the sacrifice and his wife have to climb up the sacrificial post (*yūpa*) with the aid of a wooden ladder propped up against it. First, the sacrificer asks his wife to ascend to heaven (Sanskrit *svar*, *suvar*) together with him. The wife responds affirmatively, and they begin to mount the ladder. On reaching the top of the post on behalf of himself and his wife, the sacrifice touches with his hand the *caṣāla*, the wreath- shaped head-piece of the *yūpa* which in this special case is a ring cake made of wheat flour. This unique type of *caṣāla* is not used in any other vedic sacrifice. After reaching

the upper end of *yūpa*, the ritual subject is supposed to ascend to heaven and, this, to approach gods. Accordingly, he climbs up over the top of the *yūpa* by the length of a head. *Hindu Devotional Ordeals and Their Shamanic Parallels*, pp.106-7.

28 See *TS*, VII. 112.

*bhūyo naivedyasāramṛtamayarasayogena hṛnmūrttyabhikhyam devaṃ
jājvalymānajvalanarucimanudhyāya tāṃ dhenumudrām /*

29 p.15.

30 It is submitted to Department of Sanskrit, University of Calicut in 2001.

31 Submitted to Dept. of Sanskrit College, Pattambi, University of Calicut, 2004.

32 In private conversation Dominic Goodall has pointed out that when linguistic peculiarities of *Śaivāgamanibandhana* are taken into consideration, it may be the earlier one.

33 Submitted to Dept. of Sanskrit Sahitya, SSUS, Kalady, in 2008. Recently he has published a book in Malayalam called "*Tantrasāhityam*", which is an essence of findings of academic research.

34 It is not known why he preferred to choose *Śāradātilaka*, a text of non-Keralite origin, instead of relatively earlier text *Prapañcasāra*, believed to have written by great *advaita* philosopher Śaṅkarācārya.

35 Submitted to Dept. of Sanskrit Sahitya, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, 2011.



Chapter Five

TANTRIC RITUAL MANUALS OF KERALA

Unlike the cult-specific scriptures of the great tradition of *tantra*, the tantric ritual texts of Kerala do not share a common feature. And except a few like the *PM*, *ŚN* and *VS* others cannot be said to be belonging to a particular sect. And none of them can be considered to be 'original works'. But they are merely compilations. Among the authors of these works relatively a few are identified. The time of compositions of some anonymous authors is ascertained by certain writers on Kerala *tantra* mostly based on literary evidences. But there remains score of texts whose author and dates of composition are yet to be ascertained.

All tantric manuals of Kerala are representatives of brahmanical familial traditions. In other words a text is a tradition. As there are many texts of this genre so there are many sub-traditions. The numbers of texts do not correspond to the numbers of living traditions, for there are more traditions than the number of texts. Many of familial tantric traditions of Kerala have their own ritual manuals handed down for generations. For example; the *Puṭayūrbhāṣā* is the authentic ritual manual for Puṭayūr family and the *TS* for Cennas family. It is that text, which they inherited in this manner, is the textual source of their tradition.

Mention may be made here to some of such familial traditions that are known to have produced several learned authors. Among them first

and foremost without doubt is tradition of Cennas. It would proper to call it *TS* tradition because the text became more important than the family. The other well-known familial traditions are Puliyanṇūr and Kuḻikkāṭṭu. Even if the *Keraḷotpatti*, a chronicle on Kerala history, refers to fifteen familial traditions by name, there are hundreds of them at present. Since it is improper and unnecessary to enlist the complete details of families, providing names of some of the prominent families will be enough in this context. They are Tāḻamaṇṇu, Pullāṇvāḻi, Putumana, Aṇḍalāḍi, Kainikkara, Kalppuḻa, Veḻappaṛambu, Taraṇanallūr, Manayattāṛru, Bhadrakāḷi marṛappaḷḷi and Puliyanṇūr. Notably, many of the prominent works available today in manuscripts are authored by members of any of these families. The ritual manuals of Kerala are known by the name of a traditional Brahmin family and in most cases name of the author will also be mentioned.

It is not established beyond doubt the provenance of early tantric texts because Kerala was a part of greater Tamizakam during the early ages. Though there are traces of existence of temple worship even before establishment of Brahmin settlements across Kerala, there are no demonstrable bodies of evidences yet to prove it. Historians maintain that Brahmin settlement is not a phenomenon occurred all of a sudden but was

a gradual process which might have started around fourth century A.D. and reached its zenith by 12th century A.D. And the multiplication of temples has to be seen as a result of this historical process. There are no tantric texts so far known to have composed before 11th century A.D. in Kerala apart from the passing references to early ritual practices in the early texts and inscriptions. As is known at present, the first ever attempt to encode the ritual practices in a textual form starts with the composition of the *PM*. It is followed by the composition of a numerous ritual manuals of varying degrees in the following centuries.

There are two important questions to be asked whenever someone subjects texts especially liturgies to an in-depth analysis. The questions are (i) who are the intended readers or to whom it is targeted and (ii) what purpose does it serve or did it serve? When someone approaches Kerala tantric ritual manuals with these questions in mind, it becomes obvious to him that these texts are intended for practicing priests. A firm background of oral tradition is an essential pre-requisite to follow a ritual manual in its own right. Hence these texts are written with a view to provide an easy reference for practitioners. So the order of rituals prescribed in the texts may not be corresponding to the order by which the rituals are taught in the oral transmission.¹

It is not easy to arrange these texts chronologically largely because of the uncertainty that hovers around the date of many of authors and their composition. And the most saddening fact is that none of the texts has been critically edited until now.² And the studies carried out in this field have never attempted to locate a particular text in a broader context. At this stage the only thing possible is to give a tentative chronology which is prepared based on the evidences gleaned from internal and external sources. Broadly, three distinct stages of emergence of ritual manuals can be identified. It is as given below.

First Stage: Up to *Tantrasamuccaya*

Prayogamañjarī, Śaivāgamanibandhana, Māṭṛsadbhāva, Ratnāvalī, Viṣṇusaṃhitā, Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati, Pāśupata, Devodbhava, Bahudaivatya, Kriyāsāra, Kriyādīpikā / Puṭayūrbhāṣā.

Second Stage: Up to *Anuṣṭhāna-s*

Tantrasamuccaya, Śeṣasamuccaya, Nārāyaṇātmaka, Kriyāsaṅgraha, Parameṣvarānuṣṭhāna, Tozānūranuṣṭhāna, Kaṛuttapārānuṣṭhāna, Śaivānuṣṭhāna, Vaiṣṇavānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅgraha.

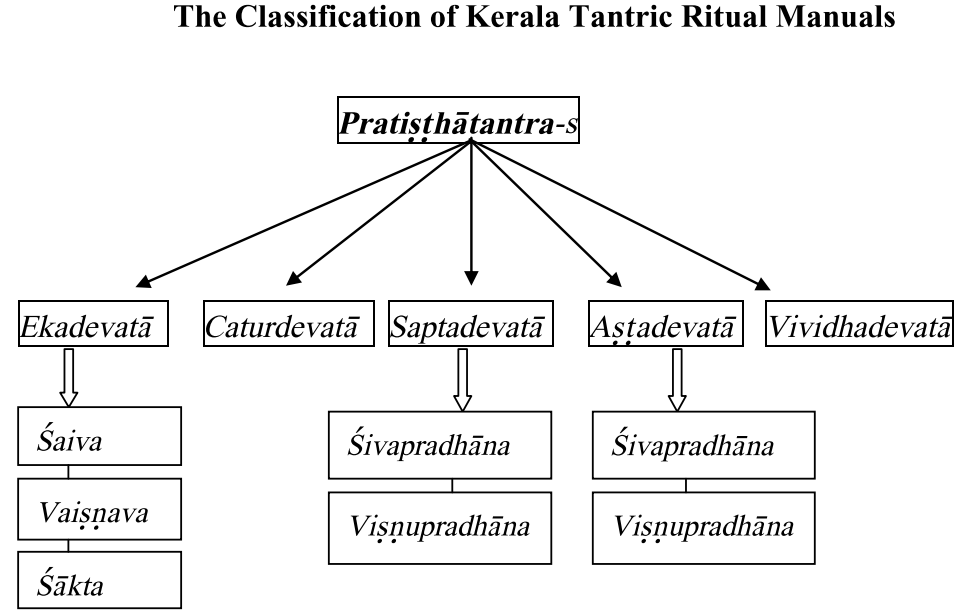
Third Stage: Up to *Keraḷīyakṣetratantrakriyāpaddhati*

Kainikkarapacca, Kuzikkāṭṭupacca, Tantradarpaṇa, Keraḷīyakṣetratantrakriyāpaddhati.

It is important to note that chronology of Kerala ritual manuals cannot be established until and unless critical editions of majority of these texts are brought out. This leaves much yet to be done in this field. The chronology that is attempted here based on the information provided by a small number of texts will never be able to provide a complete picture of Kerala ritual manuals of vast and varying nature. Therefore, an alternative model of classifying Kerala ritual manuals is attempted in this study.³ It is proposed that within the new model all ritual manuals of Kerala can be accommodated homogeneously.

The ritual manuals produced in Kerala belong to different categories. Many of them can be termed as *pratiṣṭhātantra-s*⁴ because they primarily deal with installation rituals (*pratiṣṭhā vidhi*) that include the range of rituals from preparatory to festive rituals (*utsava vidhiḥ*) followed by installation of an idol in temple. They are of five kinds (i) *ekadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*: those dealing with installation and other ancillary rituals of a single deity (ii) *caturdevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*: those dealing with rituals of four deities (iii) *saptadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*: those dealing with worship of seven deities (iv) *aṣṭadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*: those dealing with worship of eight deities and (v) *vividhadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*: those dealing with installation rituals of

more than eight deities. The *saptadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra*-s and *aṣṭadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra*-s can be further divided *Viṣṇupradhāna* and *Śivapradhāna*. This mode of classification can be graphically illustrated as following.



(Figure: V. 1)

This grouping into *Viṣṇupradhāna* and *Śivapradhāna* is based on the deity who is given primary consideration in a ritual manual. This can be easily identified by looking at whose ritual is described in detail in the beginning of a text. Usually, these texts explain the rituals of either Śiva or Viṣṇu in detail as a referential framework and variations in the rituals of rest of deities from the prescribed norm are enunciated in the

subsequent sections. The details of texts that belong to each category are as given below.

I. *Ekadevatā pratiṣṭhātantra-s*

i. Śaiva:

1. *Prayogamañjarī*
2. *Śaivāgamanibandhana*
3. *Pāśupata*

ii. Vaiṣṇava

1. *Viṣṇusaṃhitā*
2. *Vaiṣṇavanavīkaraṇa*
3. *Kriyāsaṅgraha*

iii. Śākta

1. *Mātṛsadbhāva*

II. *Caturdevatāpratiṣṭhātantra*

1. *Nārāyaṇātmaka*

III. *Saptadevtāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*

a) Śivapradhāna

1. *Kriyāsāra*

2. *Śivānuṣṭhāna*

b) ***Viṣṇupradhāna***

1. *Tantrasamuccaya*

2. *Kriyāleśasmṛti*

3. *Parameśvarānuṣṭhāna*

4. *Tozānūranuṣṭhāna*

5. *Karuttapārānuṣṭhāna*

6. *Putayūrbhāṣā*

IV. ***Aṣṭadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s***

1. *Kuzikkāṭṭupacca*

2. *Tantradarpaṇa*

3. *Kainikkarappacca*

4. *Keraḷīyakṣhetratantrakriyāpaddhati*

V. ***Vividhadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s***

1. *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*

2. *Śeṣasamuccaya*

What follows is a brief account of the primary details of each text and their salient features.

I. *Ekadevatā pratiṣṭhātantra-s*

1. *Prayogamañjarī*

It is also known as *Śaivāgamasiddhāntasāra*. The author of the *PM*⁵ is a Ravi who belonged to the *Māmaṇṇu* family of brahmins.⁶ The author proudly remarks in the beginning of text that he hails from the family of orthodox brahmins who privileged to perform vedic sacrifices. The work is the earliest of its kind and is said to be written in between tenth and eleventh centuries A.D.⁷ In 21 chapters (viz., *ācāryalakṣaṇa*, *bhūparigraha*, *vāstuyāga*, *iṣṭakādhānavidhi*, *garbhādhānavidhi*, *prāsādalakṣaṇavidhi*, *śilālakṣaṇavidhi*, *liṅgalakṣaṇa*, *dīkṣāprakṛtiḥ*, *bījāṅkurārpaṇavidhi*, *jalādhivāsa*, *vāstuhoma*, *liṅgaśuddhi*, *adhivāsana*, *pratiṣṭhāvidhi*, *arcanāpaṭala*, *caturthadivasasnāna*, *utsava* *vidhi*, *tīrthasnānavidhi*, *snapana* and *jīrṇoddhānavidhi*) it deals with wide range of subjects ranging from formally entrusting a *tantrin* the charge of rituals (*ācāryavarāṇa*) to conduct all the rituals to renovation of a temple (*jīrṇoddhāra*).

The author's command over the language and his scholarship are evidenced from the selection of appropriate words, meters and presentation of contents. The meters used are *Sragdharā*,

Śārdūlavikṛīḍita, Śikharīṇī, Mandākrāntā, Vasantatilaka, Mālinī, Drutavilāmbita, Bhujaṅgaprayāta, Indravajra, Upajāti, Śālinī, Svagata, Rathoddhatā, Anuṣṭup, Āryā and Gītī.⁸ The striking aspect of content presentation is that the measurement of ritual ingredients, be it vessels or *maṇḍala*-s, is given with exact measures and precise numbers. It appears that the author shows particular interest in the mathematical calculations in given contexts.

At the very outset the author makes it clear that he writes for intellectually less competent practitioners. And the details of the consecration rituals of *Śivaliṅga* lie scattered in several *Āgama*-s, which has to be brought together at a place.⁹ What is to be inferred from this statement is that the author was well versed in the *Śaivāgama*-s and had a remarkable practical knowledge of *Āgamic* rituals. The author situates the *PM* within the ritualistic tradition of *Śaivāgama*-s and the internal evidences point to the extent of influence of *Śaivāgama*-s on its ritual system. Notwithstanding, the author himself makes it clear that the source materials for the construction of the chapters are taken from the *Siddhāntāgama*-s. So, it is now obvious that the ritual system presented in the *PM* is not a new one but drawn on from *Āgamic* sources.

The order of division of chapters suggests that the primary concern of the author was to describe construction as well as installation rituals (*pratiṣṭhā*) in a systematic manner. The text ends with providing additional details of renovation rituals (*jīrṇoddhāra*). Comparatively, the rituals prescribed, particularly installation rituals, in the text are simple and less complicated. If it is believed that a text mirrors existing social circumstance of that time, the *PM* provides a distinct picture of early temples and tantric rituals. The temple structure prescribed is relatively uncomplicated and rituals are less elaborated and less-time consuming.

Notable Features

The ritual procedures prescribed in the Kerala tantric ritual manuals are not similar, but vary to some extent from each other. It is not practical in this context to enumerate all of them and treat them independently. Hence striking features of the respective texts alone are given in the following pages.

The notable features of the *PM* are;

- i) One of the particular rituals found in the eighteenth chapter is that the priest has to perform offerings to attendants of Śiva in presence of

Śivaliṅga, which is made with cooked rice and is placed on the head of a disciple after certain rituals.¹⁰ This peculiar observance can be traced to several Āgamic sources. According to them, if the permanent *utsavabimba* is not installed in a temple, then the *liṅga* made of cooked rice has to be used for *śrībhūtabali* during the festival season. This system is not known to have had in vogue anywhere in Kerala.

ii) Some of the striking features of the *PM* are noted already by previous scholars. S.A.S. Sarma observes the peculiarities in the *PM*'s account of throne worship (*pīṭhapūjā*) as following:

- a) In its description of throne, the *Prayogamañjarī* (16:41-42) follows the early *paddhatis* and indicates only the *yogapīṭha* in contrast to the *pañcāsana* concept of dividing the throne into five sections namely *anantāsana*, *siṃhāsana*, *yogāsana*, *vimalāsana* and *padmāsana* which is followed by the later texts (ex. *Ajita*, *Kriyāpāda* 20:143ff)
- b) In the visualization of the *pīṭha*, *Prayogamañjarī* follows a different tradition than other texts (*Somaśambhupaddhati* I, 3:43) according to which the feet are red bull, a black lion, a yellow *bhūta* and a white elephant (16:78)

c) The description of the *gātra* or struts between the four lion legs, which is not to found in the earlier texts is included here with the term *īśā* (16:43a) which may be perhaps a corruption of *elikā* (*Rauravasūtrasaṃgraha* (10:23a). But the visualization of these *gātras* is not included in the text (like in the *Kriyakramadyotikā*, 35, p.88).

d) The *chadana* or the 'coverings' for the throne are also described (16:44) which most of the pre-twelfth century *saiddhāntika* texts do not take into consideration.¹¹

Another unique feature lies in the worship of five circuits (*pañcāvaraṇa*).¹² According to the *PM*, the central deity *Sadāśiva* is encircled by deities of five circuits. The first circle consists of the worship of five *mūrti*-s beginning with *īśānādi* and *aṅgamantra*-s (*śambhupakṣa*). Then the second circle, called *mūrtipakṣa*, which consists of *sadyojāta* (west), *vāmadeva* (south), *aghora* (north), *taṭpuruṣa* (east) and *īśāna* (crown). Then the *aṅgamantra* is repeated but this time it is worshipped in four intermediate directions (SE, NE, SW, and NW) and the fifth is on the four directions (*dikṣu*). The third circle is called *vidyeśvarāvaraṇa* which consists the circle of eight *vidyeśvara*-s among them first four are situated in four directions and rest in the intermediate directions. Then the fourth

and fifth circles are of *gaṇeśvara*-s and *lokapāla*-s along with their weapons.¹³

The *Pradyota* Commentary

There is an elaborate commentary on the *PM* called *Pradyota*¹⁴ by a Trivikrama (15th century A.D.).¹⁵ Taking clue from the commentary itself, he is said to have been born in the *Ādrapadakula* family as son of Nārāyaṇa. According to Ullūr, he may be the teacher of Māndhātṛ, the author of *Smārtavaitānikaprāyaścitta*.¹⁶ But Sangamesan identifies the *Ādrapadakula* with *Atireṭam* family located in Porkkulam village at Trissur.¹⁷ As for his date Ullūr and Venkitasubrahmonia Iyer attest 16th century A.D., whereas Sangamesan takes him further back to 12th century A.D.¹⁸ He was known to have authored two more works namely a commentary on *Prapañcasāra* called *Vijñānadyotini*¹⁹ and *Vidyācandrikā*.²⁰ He seems to have drawn on numerous texts while commenting on the *PM*. The details of texts quoted are provided by the author himself. It is as following;

śrutiḥ kārāṇaṃ nāradaḥ pitāmahaḥ parāśaraḥ /

pauṣkaraṃ saptaśatikam nandikesvaraḥ //

tatvasāgaraḥ vidyācandrikā brahmāṇḍapurāṇam /

kiraṇaṃ prayogasāraḥ kapilaḥ śaivapurāṇaṃ //

sārasvataḥ rauravaḥ nibandhanaṃ /²¹

2. Śaivāgamanibandhana

The ŚN²² of *Murāribhaṭṭa* is relatively an unfamiliar work to present day scholars. Nothing much is known about the author and date of its composition. The language and structure of the work point to the fact that it might be written before the *PM*. Its authenticity and popularity are evidenced from references made by later texts and commentators. Among the authors Trivikrama- the commentator of the *PM*, Nārāyaṇa and Nīlakaṇṭha- the author of *Manuṣyālayacandrikā*, extensively quote or refer to the ŚN on many occasions. It is often referred to as *Nibandhana* in later texts like *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati* (ĪŚGP)²³ and *Kriyāsāra* (KS).²⁴

It is divided in to twenty seven chapters and all verses are found composed in *anuṣṭup* meter. The chapters are titled as *arcanāvidhiḥ*, *mantrapāṭalaḥ*, *mantrasādhanaṭpāṭalaḥ*, *agnikāryapaṭalaḥ*, *mudrāpaṭalaḥ*, *ācāryapūjanapaṭalaḥ*, *dīkṣāpaṭalaḥ*, *adhvapaṭalaḥ*, *abhiṣekaṭpāṭalaḥ*, *maṇḍalapaṭalaḥ*, *yāgabdhūmilakṣaṇavidhiḥ*, *vāstuyāgapāṭalaḥ*, *prāsāda-lakṣaṇaṃ*, *liṅgalakṣaṇavidhiḥ*, *pratimālakṣaṇavidhiḥ*, *lakṣaṇoddhāraḥ*, *maṅgalāṅkurapaṭalaḥ*, *liṅgaśuddhividhiḥ*, *adhivāsapaṭalaḥ*, *pratiṣṭhāvi-*

dhiḥ, aṅgapraṭiṣṭhāvidhiḥ, jīrṇoddhārapaṭalaḥ, prāyaścittavidhiḥ, utsava-paṭalaḥ, tīrthasnānapaṭalaḥ and *sahasrakalaśasnapanavidhiḥ* respectively.

The chapters are arranged in such a way that rituals pertaining to construction of a new temple are dealt with in detail after general discussion of rituals and their constituent elements. But unlike other texts of the kind, a chapter on expiatory rites precedes *utsava* rituals.

There are many similarities and contrasts between the *PM* and *ŚN*. It is not certain yet whether the *PM* predates *ŚN* or vice versa. The remarkable feature of the *ŚN* is that it elaborates rituals in a simple language. And compared to the *PM*, *ŚN* elaborate on rituals with minute details. The similarity in the structure and presentation of chapters of the *PM* and *ŚN* points to the possibility of a common source from which both might have drawn materials from. It is also to be noted that many of post-*TS* liturgies do not mention the *ŚN* at all.

Notable Features

Just like *Āgama*-s or *Paddhati* texts, it provides details of obligatory (*nityakarmānuṣṭhāna*) and incidental (*naimittikakarmānuṣṭhāna*) observances. The detailed description of daily religious

observances of an initiate is missing in many of the pre and post *TS* ritual manuals.

3. *Pāśupata*

The authorship of the *Pāśupata*²⁵ (*PP*) is attributed to *Nandin*, who might be a mythical figure. Evidences suggest that the *PP* has been considered to be an authentic text but unfortunately its importance is not well understood by scholars.²⁶ The *PP* seems to have profusely cited or referred to by name by several authors including both commentators of the *TS*, especially in the first and last chapters. Its influence can be inferred from the references made to it in *Vaiṣṇavānuṣṭhāna*, *KS*, *Kalaśacandrikā* etc.

The chapters in the *PP* are divided into three *kāṇḍa*-s viz., *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, *kriyākāṇḍa* and *yogakāṇḍa*. The four chapters that consist *jñānakāṇḍa* are *śilpivaraṇam*, *addhvavidhiḥ* *antroddhāra* and *arcanāpaṭala*. Similarly, the chapters form part of *kriyākāṇḍa* are *lakṣaṇapaṭala*, *liṅgasthāpanavidhi*, *mahotsava*, and *prāyaścittavidhi*. The text ends with *yogakāṇḍa*.

The internal evidences point to its direct link with *Siddhānta Āgama*-s. For instance; classification of contents into three *Kāṇḍa*-s,

philosophical explanation of 36 *tattva*-s, visualization of the main deity *Sadāśiva* etc. are drawn directly from *Āgama*-s.

Notable features

i) The creation of the *tattva*-s proceeds from Śiva and the order is given as following. Śiva- Śakti- Nāda (from *Nāda* originates *varṇa*, *pada* and *mantra*)-Bindu-Sadāśiva- Iccā (from *bindu*), Jñāna (from *nāda*) and Kriyā (from *kalā*)- Caturātmā (*ātmā*, *antarātmā*, *paramātmā* and *jñānātmā*) then Śuddha (five *tattva*-s), Śuddhāśuddha (seven *tattva*-s) and Aśuddha (24 *tattva*-s).²⁷ The order of Śiva- Śakti- Nāda-Bindu- Sadāśiva is found to have been followed in all pre-TS Kerala tantric literature.

ii) The descriptions of *Pañcākṣara mantra* and *mudra*-s are the other noteworthy points.²⁸ The *mudra*-s follow a distinct order as *prasādinī*, *vandanī*, *āvāhanī*, *sthāpanā*, *sānnidhyamudrā* and *pañcamukhī*.²⁹ This is not so common in Kerala tantric literature or in practice.

iii) In the *pīṭhapūjā* the four qualities of *buddhi* namely *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aśvarya* are to be visualized as red bull, black lion, yellow demon and white elephant respectively.³⁰

iv) Another important feature is that the deity is invoked from the heart.³¹ This is also not so common and rarely found in practice.

v) After the *bali* of ancillary deities, the remaining of offerings are to be offered to the *Nirmālyadhārin* i.e., *Caṇḍeśa*.³² Generally these are offered to *Kṣetrapāla* not to *Nirmālyadhārin*.

vi) After being initiated one is not supposed to discriminate human beings on the basis of their caste or creed. He should treat everyone equally.³³

vii) The diffusion of lesser divine beings who occupy the inner space of temple compound into the main deity's idol through yogic visualization is the core of *dhyānaśāṅkoca* ritual, which forms part of *jīrṇoddhāra* (renovation). The visualization is prescribed to be done as follows; the *ācārya* has first to visualize the divine power to have spread out up to the *prākāra* i.e., fence. Then the principles beginning with *bindu* have to be dissolved into the following ones in ascending order i.e., *bindu* into *nāda*, *nāda* into *śakti* and *śakti* into *paramātmān*. Here the process is compared with rolling back of the net while fishing.³⁴ The same simile is found used in *TS*³⁵ also.

4. *Viṣṇusaṃhitā*

The *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* (VS) of Sumati³⁶ is the only *Vaiṣṇava Pāñcarātra* treatise believed to have been written in Kerala. Among the traditional *Saṃhitā*-s, *Padmasaṃhitā* (14th century A.D.) counts VS among the other *Pāñcarātra* scriptures. Nothing is known about the author other than his name. The commentators of VS have tried to trace out the lineage of the author but they could not shed a fresh light on this matter.³⁷

Being a typical *Pāñcarātra*³⁸ treatise it prescribes a ritual system that bears characteristics of present day Kerala tantric practices. But a close examination would reveal the fact that structurally it varies to some extent from other *Pāñcarātra* treatises. Regarding the date of composition, possibly it might have been composed after the *ĪŚGP* since the latter neither refers to it by name nor quotes from it. But later texts, especially the *TS*, rely to a great extent upon the VS and being based on which it presents *Vaiṣṇava* ritual system in an authentic and comprehensive manner. Its impact on Kerala tantric ritual customs and even in the process of temple construction is very deep and pervasive.³⁹

In 30 chapters (*tantrōddeśaḥ*, *tantravyākhyā*, *viṣṇuvaibhavaṃ*, *kṣetranirṇayaḥ*, *mantrōddhāraḥ*, *arcanāvidhiḥ*, *mudrālakṣaṇaṃ*, *agnisaṃskāraḥ*, *maṇḍalalakṣaṇaṃ*, *dīkṣāvidhiḥ*, *dīkṣitābhiṣekaḥ*, *bhūmilakṣa-*

*ṇaṃ, prāsādaavidhiḥ, bimbalakṣaṇaṃ, pratiṣṭhāpañcakaṃ, bimbaśuddhiḥ, adhivāsaḥ, pratiṣṭhāvidhiḥ, pratiṣṭhānantarakriyā, utsavaavidhiḥ, yātrā, balidānaavidhiḥ, viśvārcanaṃ, jīrṇoddhāraḥ, prāyaścittavidhiḥ, snapana-vidhiḥ, prokṣaṇavidhiḥ, karmaśeṣaḥ, samayācāralakṣaṇaṃ and bhāgavato-
yogaḥ* respectively) the *VS* expounds a vast spectrum of rituals.

Notable Features

i) As said earlier, the rituals prescribed here are similar to a great extent to present day Kerala tantric customs and practices. One of such practices is the imparting *Jīvāvahanamantra* at the time of installation of an idol to the officiant who does the ritual for the first time. Although the practice of tantric initiation is almost on the verge of extinction, imparting the *Jīvāvahanamantra* to a novice is still in practice in Kerala among several priestly families.

ii) The *puṣpayāga* a ritual performed by making a diagram with different colors of flowers is not in vogue in Kerala.⁴⁰

There are two commentaries on it namely *Hārīṇī* of Puliyannūr Nārāyaṇa, son of Udayana.⁴¹ He is also known to have written a commentary on the *KS* of Ravi and an independent work in Malayalam

called *Kriyāsāram*.⁴² The other commentary on the *VS* is *Tattvapradīpikā* of Nāgaswāmy.⁴³

The remarkable point is that there are many parallel verses in the *ŚN* and *VS*. So, there is a connecting link, which binds these three texts i.e., *PM*, *ŚN* and *VS* together. This missing link is yet to be discovered.

The Similarities among *PM*, *ŚN* and *VS*



(Figure: V. 2)

5. *Kriyāsaṅgraha*

The *Kriyāsaṅgraha*⁴⁴ (*K.Sa*) is another ritual manual devoted to prescribe rituals of Viṣṇu alone. This is an unpublished work and the authorship is attributed to Śaṅkara of Kuzikkāṭṭu Mana. He is believed to have lived in the latter half of the seventeenth century A.D.⁴⁵ The other works attributed to the author are *Vaiṣṇavānuṣṭhānakalāpasāṅgraha*,⁴⁶ *Nāgabalikrama / kalpa*⁴⁷ and *Parāstrotra*.⁴⁸

The contents of the work are divided into eighteen *paṭala*-s and verses are written in *anuṣṭup* metre. First sixteen *paṭala*-s are concerned with consecration rituals (*pratiṣṭhā*), festival rituals (*utsava*) and expiation

rituals (*prāyaścitta*).⁴⁹ Renovation ritual (*jīrṇoddhāra*) is the core of discussion of seventeenth *paṭala*. The work ends with *karmaśeṣapaṭala* where he includes all the supplementary details including the characteristics of the land to be procured for construction, measurements of utensils and objects used for rituals, details of *mantra*-s to be used in specific contexts etc.⁵⁰ It can be inferred from the order of chapter construction that the importance is given to the rituals pertaining to consecration of a new temple.

The author makes it very clear at the outset of the work that he is going to write is just an elaboration of consecration rituals of Viṣṇu laid down in the Vaiṣṇava section of the *KS*. He explicitly states that the *KS* is written after consulting several *Āgama*-s and *Tantra*-s and it really contains essence of rituals prescribed in *Āgamic* and *Tantric* literature. But his work (i.e., *K.Sa*) is purported to bring out the rituals of Viṣṇu alone following line of the *KS*.⁵¹

One of the peculiar features of the *K. Sa* is that it is one of the few post-*TS* texts to describe architectural matters in detail. While going into the details pertaining to architecture the author seems to have tried to include all the related materials from the concerned texts. And he seems to

have taken extra care to provide additional details on architectural concepts and measurements.

The author refers to or quotes several works while presenting the rituals. It tells the author's in-depth knowledge of the subject. Interestingly, it is also found that the author was well aware of the texts of classical tradition of *tantra*, i.e., *Āgama*-s and *Samhita*-s. The texts referred to by him are *ĪŚGP/Gurudeva*,⁵² *Mayamata*,⁵³ *VS*,⁵⁴ *TS*,⁵⁵ *ŚN-/Mura-ri*,⁵⁶ *Padmasamhitā*,⁵⁷ *Sātvatasamhitā/Sātvatāgama*,⁵⁸ *Tattvasāgara*,⁵⁹ *Pra-pañcasāra*,⁶⁰ *Kāmikāgama*,⁶¹ *Nārāyaṇātmaka (NĀ)*,⁶² and *Ratnāvalī*.⁶³

It is to be noted that the ritual procedures explained in the *K.Sa* resemble that of *Kalaśacandrikā* and many parallel verses can also be found. But the interesting point is that the author does not acknowledge the *Kalaśacandrikā* anywhere in the work. However, it is obvious that both are interconnected to a great extent and the interdependence points to the likelihood that the authors of both of these texts might be belonging to same preceptorial lineage. It is only after a comparative study of both texts can anything be said on flow of transmission and chronology of the texts.

N.P. Unni has noted the major distinguishing characteristics of the *K.Sa* in his *Tantra Literature of Kerala*. But the manuscript consulted by N.P. Unni and the IFP. T. No. 850 as well as other manuscripts of the same available in private manuscript collections vary to a great extent. The difference is quite obvious even in the beginning verses. The beginning verses given by N.P. Unni are;

*ahamāśraye sakalasampadāvahaṃ paramēśvara-
 praṇayinī padadvayam /
 yadanusmṛtikṣapita pāpasañcayāḥ paramātmā-
 bhāvamupayānti yoginaḥ //
 praṇipatya parāṃ devīṃ durgāṃ durgatitārīṇīm /
 tantrāgamoditā tasyā likhyante sthāpanakriyāḥ //*

Here in the last line the installation rituals of Durgā are proposed to be explained. But this contrasts with another verse from nineteenth *paṭala*.

The verse runs as;

*ācāryavarāṇapūrvam tirthāplāvanāntimaṃ kriyākāṇḍam /
 viṣṇorabhihitametad gartāranyākhyā śaṅkareṇaivam //*

Here it is clearly stated that the rituals of Viṣṇu are explained in the preceding chapters. Whereas, the other manuscript⁶⁴ begins as;

ahamānandakandāya viṣṇave viśvasākṣiṇe /
mano vāktanubhiḥ kurve dhyāna stuti namaskriyāḥ //
vairājalaiṅgikeśākhya jāgrat svapna suṣuptikam /
śabdārcīścinmayam dhāma bhāsatām hṛdi naḥ sadā //

And it is made clear after a couple of verses that the installation rituals of Viṣṇu are going to be explained in the following chapters. In short, none of the verses cited from the manuscript of the *K.Sa* by N.P. Unni is found in that of IFP manuscript.

Notable Features

There are some notable features and to mention a couple of them (i) the *adhikāri dikṣā* (this is given in fifth *paṭala*) and (ii) the description of *vāstumāṇḍala* of 64, 81 and 100 *puṭa*-s.⁶⁵ Regarding the *adhikāri dikṣā* it does not figure commonly in Kerala ritual manuals. And regarding the account of *vāstumāṇḍala*, the pre and post-*TS* texts generally speak of worship of *vāstupuruṣa* in 64 and 81 *puṭa*-s.

6. Māṭṛsadbhāva

The *Māṭṛsadbhāva* (*Mā.Sad*) is also an unpublished work and to make the matters more complicated, its available manuscripts are incomplete. Therefore it is difficult to get a complete picture of chapter divisions and the topics dealt with in each chapter.⁶⁶ It is the only known

Śākta treatise from Kerala devoted exclusively to the ritual procedures of the Goddess *Rurujit*. The author and the date of composition are still not ascertained. It suggests that *Mā.Sad* has been in existence around eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. But it cannot be established until more substantial literary or other sorts of evidences are found. Among the authors of Kerala ritual manuals known at present, it was the author of the *Śeṣasamuccaya* (ŚS) who made use of it extensively while writing the ritual system of the Goddess *Rurujit*. In his auto commentary to the text called *Vimarśinī* he states explicitly that the consecration rituals of *Rurujit* prescribed in the ŚS are drawn on *Mā.Sad*. It is to be noted that there are similarities and contrasts in the ritual system prescribed by the *Mā.Sad* with that of ŚS.

II. *Caturdevatāpratiṣṭhātantra*

Nārāyaṇātmaka

The *NĀ* is another relatively less noticed text by scholars. It is dealing with the installation rituals of four deities, viz., Viṣṇu, Śāstr, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa and Brahman. In the available manuscript chapters after fourth are not well divided. The text begins with a conversation between Pauṣkara and Nārada, who describes ritual specifications from *vāstusaṅgraha* up to *tīrthasnāna*.⁶⁷ These subjects are covered in the first

three chapters. Here also the primary concern of the text is to describe preliminaries and rituals of construction of a new temple. They include securing an appropriate place, preliminary rituals performed during construction, purificatory rituals (*prāsādaśuddhi* and *bimbaśuddhi*), installation of *pīṭha* (*pīṭhapraṭiṣṭhā*) and deity, installation of ancillary deities (*parivārapraṭiṣṭhā*) and the rituals of *utsava*. The next chapter describes the renovation rituals in short and subsequently expiatory rituals are prescribed. Then a chapter on the rituals of Śāstr begins with delineation of various *mantra*-s of the deity. It continues on to explain the daily rituals and rituals of *utsava* in the next two sections. Then a new chapter on variations in similar rituals of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa is given in short. It also continues for next couple of sections and ends before opening a chapter on rituals of Brahman. The following sections just note the variations and additions to be made in the rituals prescribed in the preceding chapters.

Notable Features

The *NĀ* is noted for some unique features that we do not find in any other early Kerala tantric texts. They are;

i) There are some invocatory verses which are (*prārthanā mantra-s*)⁶⁸ not found in other such texts and not in vogue at present as well. These are recited on specific occasions in the context of installation rituals.

ii) The *mantra-s* by which the offerings are made to ancillary deities in *utsavabali* are considerably different from similar ritual texts. The difference in the *mantra-s* include that of *dikpāla-s*, *vīrabhadra* and *gaṇapati*, the number and mantras of *mātr-s*, *uttaramātr-s*, *garuḍa* etc.⁶⁹

iii) One of the major differences lies in the funerary- like observance that follow the *dhyānasaṅkoca*. After the rituals of *dhyānasaṅkoca* the idol of main deity is laid on the sand on the north direction inside the temple complex. All the texts including the *TS* prescribe to sprinkle *tila* and *akṣata* around the idol while taking three anti clockwise rounds. Here the difference is that the *NĀ* prescribes to add water in addition to other two objects and the mix has to be poured uninterruptedly around the idol.⁷⁰

iv) The different *mantra-s* of Śāstr̥ prescribed in the text is another important point. These particular *mantra-s* do not feature in pre or post-*TS* texts.⁷¹

v) Another difference in the ritual is of the *mantra-s* of the retinues of Śāstr̥ in daily ritual.⁷² And there are also variations in *dvārapāla* *mantra-*

s⁷³ and mantras of deities worshiped in the *balipīṭha*.⁷⁴ Similar variations are found in the rituals of Śāṅkaranārāyaṇa also.⁷⁵

III. *Saptadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*

1. *Kriyāsāra*

The *KS*⁷⁶ is attributed to a Ravi whose date is not fixed beyond doubt yet. According to Ullūr, Ravi Nampūtiri, son of Subrahmaṇya belonged to Putuśśeri family.⁷⁷ The *KS* of Ravi should not be confused with another work by same title which belongs to Vīraśaiva tradition. It is attributed to Nīlakaṇṭha Śivācārya by tradition. The author of Keralite tantric ritual manual can be roughly placed before the time of the *TS* and after the *VS*. It is the *KS* introduced a paradigmatic shift in the composition of tantric treatises as bringing together ritual practices of divergent cults like Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta in same text. That means the same text contains rituals of a number of deities and rituals laid down are similar to each other to some extent. Unlike the post- *TS* ritual manuals, the rituals of each deity are given in separate sections. Each section contains almost seven or eight chapters.

This style of presentation is later found to have followed by several texts namely, *NĀ* and *Kalaśacandrikā*. It is divided into seven sections

and contains sixty-nine chapters altogether. Each one of these sections is devoted to deal with ritual specifications of one of the seven deities namely, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, Durgā, Subrahmaṇya, Gaṇapati and Śāstr̥. The topics ranging from the selection of the appropriate site for the construction of the temple up to rituals of *utsava* (*utsavavidhi*) are included in each section. The remarkable point related to chapter division in the *KS* is after the description of installation rituals of all the seven deities the 63rd *paṭala* begins with consecration rituals of cow pen (*Gośālā*). And in the *Gośālā* the idol Kṛṣṇa (Govinda) is installed along with that of a cow.⁷⁸ The consecration rituals in all details are explained in the following three chapters. Then it turns on to the installation rituals of Saptamātr̥-s in 67th chapter and continues on in the following two chapters.

The three earlier sources referred to by name in the *KS* are the *VS*, *ŚN* and *Devodbhava*. The extent of its influence on the later texts is quite visible particularly in *Śivānuṣṭhāna* and *Tantrasaṅgraha* of Kelallur Somayaji. Both of these texts refer to the *KS* by name wherever they have happened to quote from it. There are a couple of commentaries on the *KS* viz., *prakāśinī*⁷⁹ and another commentary by Puliyannūr Nārāyaṇan.⁸⁰

2. *Śivānuṣṭhāna*

This is another unpublished work on Kerala *tantra*. The name of the text sounds the description of ritual observance of Śiva alone. But it in Sanskrit prose deals with the installation rituals of seven deities.⁸¹ Though it does not provide any clue to whereabouts of its author, on two occasions the author seems to salute Śrī Śaṅkara⁸² and Dakṣiṇāmūrti.⁸³ Even if Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the *grāmadevatā* of the natives of *Śukapuram*, this alone is not enough to arrive at a conclusion regarding the author's native place.⁸⁴

This is in all probability a post-*TS* work since it refers to the *TS* by name on a number of occasions. The other works cited are the *KS*⁸⁵ *Skandasadbhāva*⁸⁶ and *Mārkaṇḍeyanibandhana*.⁸⁷

Unlike the other texts, it starts with ritual process of purification of body (*dehaśuddhi*). Initially, it goes on to explain in vernacular language but in *devanāgarī* script. Then the focus turns on details of rituals of Śiva and expiation rituals that serve as a general background for explaining installation rituals in the following sections. This is quite an unusual way of beginning a Kerala ritual manual. Up to the rituals of sowing the seed (*aṅkurāropaṇa*) it describes the rituals of Śiva alone. But then it follows to note the variations associated with rituals of that of other deities. The

order of systematic construction of rituals is slightly different compared to that of other texts. After the expiation rituals consisting of *dhārā*, *avagāha*, *pañcagavya*, *pañcaka* and *mahākumbha* it goes on to explain the fire rituals (*agnijanana*). It is followed by the rituals performed particularly on the eighth day of installation ritual after closing the door of sanctum sanctorum for three consecutive days. The remarkable point is that the installation rituals are comparatively less elaborated. The Vedic *mantra*-s used for different rituals are given at the end. But this particular manuscript ends with *dvādaśyārādhana* *vidhi*, which forms the core of theme the last seven pages.

The ritual system advocated by the text is slightly varies from other texts. To cite a few variations see the descriptions of the *bhasmadhāraṇavidhi*,⁸⁸ *śaṅkha* *pūraṇa*,⁸⁹ *nivedya*,⁹⁰ *prasanna* *pūjā*,⁹¹ the visualization of *prāsāda* *mantra*,⁹² *prāsāda* *suddhi*,⁹³ *agnijanana*,⁹⁴ visualization of *Prabhā* and *Satyaka*,⁹⁵ *kalaśa* *pūjā*,⁹⁶ *dhyāna* *saṅkoca*⁹⁷ and in the number of vedic *mantra*-s (*ṛk*-s) based on the to which particular division (*śākhā*) of *Ṛgveda* and *Yajurveda* the practitioner belongs.⁹⁸

3. *Kriyādīpikā or Puṭayūrbhāṣā*

As per the available evidences the *Kriyādīpikā or Puṭayūrbhāṣā* (*PB*) is the first text ever written in *Maṇipravāḷam* style (mix of both

Sanskrit and Malayalam languages) on temple rituals. It is written by Vāsudeva of Puṭayūr of Pūntoṭṭaṃ family situated at Thalipparambu in North Malabar. The author refers to his father's name as Nārāyaṇa and his preceptor Pāṇḍuraṅga as an ardent devotee of Cellūrnātha, popular as Perumṭṛkkovilappan (Śiva), the deity of Talipparambu temple. He is also known to have authored another work with the same title *Puṭayūrbhāṣā* which lays down the *Bauddhāyanasmārta* rituals and *Ekaśvāsa*, a work on expiatory rites.

Regarding the date of its composition Kanippayur Śankaran Nampūtirippādu in his forward to the *PB* has tried to establish that it must have been written a century before the *TS*. The evidence he has put forth to substantiate his point is the penultimate stanza of twelfth chapter which reads as;

evam kṛtā tantrabhāṣā tantriṇāṃ mārgadarśinī /

cellūradhipatījyeyam bhūyādasmanuṣṭhitā // (XII. 236).

When he translated the word compound *cellūradhipatījyeyam* into *Kali* chronogram he got the corresponding Christian era 1343 A.D.⁹⁹ But this interpretation raises many questions. It is not clearly stated why that particular word compound is chosen for establishing the date of composition of the *PB*. Secondly, the meaning of last line of the verse can

be interpreted as 'this deals with the worship of deity of Cellūr and must be followed by descendants of my family'. This interpretation seems to be more likely when we take into account the information provided by the family members themselves that they still closely observe the practices prescribed in the *PB* as such when they perform rituals particularly at Talipparambu Rajarajesvara Temple. And none of the early *TS* manuals or the commentators including that of *Vivarāṇa* and *Vimarśinī* refers to the *PB* or quotes from it. So, unless and until thorough enquiry is done into this issue it is not safe to conclude that the *PB* predates the *TS*.¹⁰⁰

In twelve chapters, it principally deals with installation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and *utsava* rituals of seven deities, viz., Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, Durgā, Subrahmaṇya, Gaṇapati and Śāstrī. The chapters are arranged in such a way that it proceeds from the rituals of constructing a new temple up to the measurements of the materials used in rituals. It can be stated that the particular emphasis on ritual-centered system is marked by the emergence of the *PB*. It is a pioneering work in the sense that never before a text has been written systematically elaborating all aspects of temple rituals.

4. *Tantrasamuccaya*

The *TS* of Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri¹⁰¹ who was supposed to have lived at Vanneri in Ponnani Thaluk, Kerala, remains the most influential work on Kerala *tantra* even today.¹⁰² According to the evidence provided at the end of the twelfth chapter by the author himself he was born in *Kali* year 4529 that is equal to 1427-28 A.D.¹⁰³ He is known to be one of eighteen and half court poets of the King Zamorin, Mānavikrama of Calicut.¹⁰⁴ Conventionally it is believed that the king ordered to write a treatise on temple rituals within forty-one days. Whether this be true or false, it is certain that he had enjoyed enough royal patronage and support that was proven favorable for composing his *magnum opus*. There are two more works attributed to him, which are *Devyālayacandrikā*¹⁰⁵ and *Mānavavāstulakṣaṇa*¹⁰⁶

The *TS* is an ample testimony of author's command over the language and his in-depth knowledge on the subject. It is a well-crafted ritual manual in which the author has systematically expounded the ritual of seven deities viz., Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, Durgā, Subrahmaṇya, Gaṇapati and Śāstrī in twelve chapters (*paṭala*-s) consisting of 1801 stanzas altogether. In the first two *paṭala*-s the rituals ranging from construction of new temple including finding an appropriate land up

to preliminary rituals of construction are explained. In the following eight chapters the rituals of consecration of a new temple up to *utsava* are given in a systematic order. The expiation and renovation rituals are the subject matter of the rest of the chapters. Remarkably, this has become a standard model for later texts even though most of post-*TS* manuals did not seem to have included a section for architect. The author's proficiency and depth of knowledge of matters related to architecture is amply reflected in the first two chapters of the *TS*. Moreover, his other two works that exclusively deal with architecture also support the above statement. Even today the *TS* remains one of the texts referred to by majority of professional architects while they are about to prepare a layout of a temple. This very knowledge of matters related to architecture is seen lacking in the majority of ritual manuals of post-*TS* authors of Kerala.

He is seen employed wide range of meters to make his work more intelligible and enjoyable as well. The methodology followed by the author is that the rituals of Viṣṇu is explained with all its technical details in the beginning and just the variations in the rituals of rest of deities from this standard format are pointed out subsequently.¹⁰⁷

As the name indicates the *TS* is not an original work but a compilation (*samuccaya*). The remarkable fact is that it does not

acknowledge the earlier sources. But evidently the author seems to be aware of prevalence of other similar ritual traditions of his time.

The Commentaries of *Tantrasamuccaya*

The easiest way to find out the works consulted by the author of the *TS* is to explore into its two learned commentaries viz., *Vimarśinī*⁷¹⁰⁸ and *Vivaraṇa*¹⁰⁹ by his son Cennas Śankaran Nampūtiri and one of his disciples Kṛṣṇan Nampūtiri¹¹⁰ respectively. These two are the most reliable than other sources for the simple reason that both of them i.e., Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa belong to the same preceptorial lineage and the works cited by them might had been accessible to author of the *TS* as well. Notably, the *Vimarśinī* commentator mentions the sources he has consulted by name.¹¹¹ More of his citations from the earlier sources are found particularly in the beginning and the ending chapters. Comparatively in the middle chapters, which are dealing with consecration rituals, hardly we could find citations from external sources. Another remarkable difference between the characteristics of these commentaries is that the author of *Vimarśinī* does not try to delve deep into the intricacies of rituals and its philosophical implications. Rather he seems to be content with providing the primary meanings of the original verses. So his commentary serves as a guide for beginners who could not

follow the meanings of the original work. Whereas, the *Vivarāṇa* commentary seeks to provide a scholastic interpretation of the *TS* in which the author brings in all the sources known to him but without acknowledging his indebtedness to them properly. He draws on numerous sources of which some texts are hardly heard quoted or referred to by other authors. Regarding the literary standard of *Vivarāṇa* commentary even those who have good command over language in addition to considerable expertise in the subject would find it difficult to grasp his ideas. Remarkably these two commentators are found to have followed two different versions of the *TS*. That is the acceptable version of the *TS* for both vary considerably from each other's. Not only there are differences of opinion between them in the matters related to acceptable version of the text but also in the selection of *mantra*-s and ritual procedures.¹¹² The regional as well as temporal factors associated with transmission of tradition account for this difference of opinion.

The Less-Known Commentaries on the *Tantrasamuccaya*

The Malayalam commentary¹¹³ of Maheśvaran Bhaṭṭatiri (1795-1865 A.D.) who belonged to Kuzikkāṭṭu Illam, Tiruvalla features prominent in the early commentaries of the *TS*. In addition to this one he is also known to have authored (i) a commentary on *ŚS* (ii)

Kuzikkāṭṭupacca (KP)- a ritual manual written following the *TS* in Malayalam (iii) *Tantrasamuccayārthatātparyam*- elucidation of the *TS* in vernacular and (iv) *jīrṇoddhāra*- a work on the details of renovation rituals.

In the Malayalam commentary of the *TS* the author mentions numerous works by name. The list of works includes *Śilparatna*, *Kalaśacandrika*, *Āgama-s*, *Prapañcasāra* and *Vivaraṇa* and *Vimarśinī* commentaries of the *TS*. E.V Rāman Nampūiri observes that the author is found closely following the *Vivaraṇakāra*'s reading and line of interpretation throughout. So it is natural to see much variation from the printed version of the *TS*. Because, the available printed version of the *TS* favors the reading of the *Vimarśinī* commentator.¹¹⁴

E.V mentions another Malayalam commentary of an unknown author. It is said to have transmitted in a single manuscript that he could procure from royal family of Alangttu, situated in Alwaye. Both of these commentaries were published from Trivandrum Manuscript Library in Trivandrum Malayalam series (series Nos. 64, 66 and 68) in three volumes during 1941, 42 and 45 respectively. That means these commentaries were published almost 67 years ago and not reprinted.

There is another Malayalam commentary called *Bālaprabodhinī* written by one of the members of Puṭayūr family. None of the previous scholars has referred to this text and it remains relatively an unknown commentary on the *TS* even today. The present scholar got a copy of it from the manuscript collections of Aṇḍalāḍi Mana, Pattambi and no other manuscript of it is found so far in any private manuscript collections. As the title suggests, it is written in a simple Malayalam language which is intended for those who are not good at Sanskrit. The manuscript is as such complete and it contains commentaries on the verses of twelve *paṭala*-s of the *TS*.

The last known effort to explain the *TS* in vernacular was undertaken by a traditional scholar K.P.C Anujan Bhattatirippaḍu. It is available now with original text and its meaning in Malayalam. This is the text widely read in and outside Kerala for last two decades.

5. *Kriyāleśasmṛti*

The *Kriyāleśasmṛti* is attributed to Nīlakaṇṭhan Nampūtiri¹¹⁵ and nothing much is known about the author. It is a work dealing with installation and consecration rituals of seven deities namely Viṣṇu, Durgā, Śiva, Skanda, Gaṇapati, Śāstr̥ and Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa.¹¹⁶ The topics dealt with in the text are similar to other texts of its kind i.e., ranging from

aṅkurārpaṇa to *tīrthayātrā*. But the chapters are arranged in a slightly different order in comparison to other texts of same genre.¹¹⁷

6. *Parameśvarānuṣṭhāna*

As the name suggests the *Parameśvarānuṣṭhāna* (*P.Anu*) is written by a Parameśvara¹¹⁸ and it is also known as *Anuṣṭhānakrama* or *Anuṣṭhānapaddhati*. Though it has been profusely quoted by later authors nothing is known about the author. There are people who conventionally ascribe its authorship to one of the brahmin tantric priests who belonged to Kozhikkottiri family. The reason they state is that it is in their lineage the names Parameśvara or Divākara recur for generations.¹¹⁹

The *P.Anu* is written in a simple Sanskrit prose following the typical ritual manual format. Though major portions are dealt in Sanskrit the names of materials, especially names of those materials (*saṅghātadravya*-s) that are to be placed in pots (*kalaśa*-s), are given with corresponding vernacular translation. The construction of a new temple is its focal point and as usual, it ends with the detailed description of renovation rituals. In the systematic construction of rituals it appears to have modeled on the *TS*,¹²⁰ for it initially centers on the rituals of Viṣṇu and subsequently the variations in the similar rituals of other six deities are given.¹²¹ But the *KS*¹²² is the only earlier text referred to by name. On

several occasions the citations are made without direct reference to the source i.e, *KS*. Unlike the pre-*TS* texts it seems to be well aware of other ritual traditions (*pakṣa*-s)¹²³ and the author rightly point out wherever the variations exist. The very fact suggests that by the time of the author there were many such non-*TS* traditions and they had gained wide currency across Kerala.

The uniqueness of the *P.Anu* lies in the ritual system it prescribes and it is duly acknowledged by the later writers. The evidence for this can be found in *Karuttapārānuṣṭhāna*, *Tozānūranuṣṭhāna* and *Kainikkarapacca* as authors of these texts found to have taken particular care to note all the ritual variations found in the *P.Anu*. It also shows the extent of influence the *P.Anu* has exerted on post-*TS* ritual manuals and practice. The *P.Anu* features first among the lists of the post-*TS* ritual manuals and further research is required to know the reasons for it to be held authentic by later tantric preceptors.

7. *Tozānūranuṣṭhāna*

It is also known as *Anuṣṭhānasamuccaya* or *Tozuvānūranuṣṭhāna* (*T.Anu*). As the title *T.Anu* suggests it was written by one of the family members of Tozānūr and the author gives crucial evidences regarding his

whereabouts and his preceptorial lineage in the benedictory verses. He states that his name is Nārāyaṇa.¹²⁴ And also he pays tribute to his preceptor Bhāgavata, who is Nārāyaṇa (son of Mātṛdatta) by name. N.P. Unni is of the opinion that it clearly refers to Melpattūr Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭatiri who lived around between 1560 A.D. and 1666 A.D. So he attests the date of author to seventeenth century A.D.¹²⁵ In another instance he implicitly states that he is a disciple of *Vivaraṇakāra* i.e., Kṛṣṇa.¹²⁶ He praises the goddess of Mukkola on number of occasions. This reference to goddess of Mukkola points to the fact that he was native of Mukkola.

It is another post- *TS* work devoted to rituals of temple construction and allied subjects of seven deities.¹²⁷ The chapters are divided into ten sections and it is written in a simple Sanskrit prose. N.P. Unni observes that the work is divided into nine *paṭala*-s. But the three manuscripts of the *T.Anu* that were consulted for the present thesis do not have its contents divided into *paṭala*-s at all. His statement that the author closes each chapter by dedicating it to Kṛṣṇa also does not seem to be correct. It is to be noted that there is no uniformity regarding the division of contents in the *T.Anu*. Some chapters begin with benedictory verses

that are in praise of either *Kṛṣṇa* or *Mukkola Bhagavati*, but others are not. The verses quoted by N.P. Unni are found only at the end of the fifth chapter. Moreover, the last *paṭala* on expiation rituals is found to be classified into several *paricchada*-s.

The *T.Anu* begins with procedures of ritualistic purification of body (*dehaśuddhi*). It is accomplished by means of breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) and installation of *mantra*-s in different parts of body (*mantranyāsa*). Then it turns on *aṅkurāropaṇa* and here onwards the rest of the topics correspond to contents of third to ten chapters of the *TS*. Wherever the occasion demands the author includes the variations noted by both exegetes of the *TS*. References also are made to several pre and post- *TS* works that include the *VS*, *NĀ*, *PP*, *P.Anu*, *Ratnāvalī*, *Skandasamhitā* etc.¹²⁸

8. *Karuttapārānuṣṭhāna*

The *Karuttapārā* is a family name of Brahmins who are settled adjacent to Alathiyur Temple, Thirur, Malappuram District. The *Karuttapārānuṣṭhāna* (*K.Anu*) is also known as *Anuṣṭhāna* or *Tantrasamuccayoktakriyākramaḥ*. The authorship of the *K.Anu* is attributed to Nārāyaṇa.¹²⁹ It is an unpublished work and manuscripts are

available in Oriental Manuscript Library, Trivandrum,¹³⁰ IFP¹³¹ and in manuscript collections of Vezapparambu Mana.

It consists of ten *paṭala*-s. Being modeled on the *TS* in style and content it deals with the rituals of seven deities, viz., Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śankaranārāyaṇa, Durgā, Subrahmaṇya, Gaṇapati and Śāstr̥ exactly in the same in the order in simple Sanskrit prose.¹³²

A wide range of texts are referred to by the author which include *P.Anu*,¹³³ *PP*,¹³⁴ *ĪŚGP*,¹³⁵ *NĀ*,¹³⁶ *VS*,¹³⁷ *Hārīṇī* *vyākhyā* of *VS*,¹³⁸ *Ratnāvalī*,¹³⁹ *Tantraprāyaścitta*¹⁴⁰ and *PB*.¹⁴¹ He explicitly refers to his preceptor, the celebrated exegete of the *TS* i.e., *Vivaraṇakāra* Kṛṣṇa.¹⁴²

In the presentation of rituals and prescription of visualization techniques he seems to be closely adhering to *Vivaraṇakāra*. On many occasions he echoes his preceptor's words as such. While reading the text one may get the impression that the author takes much pain to make the *Vivaraṇakāra*'s interpretations simple and comprehensive. But in the process he did not forget to point out the differences of opinion between the *Vimarśinīkāra* and *Vivaraṇakāra* and sometimes the *TS* regarding the ritual procedures and slight variation of *mantra*-s. However, all the evidences suggest the possibility that he should be a disciple of Kṛṣṇa.¹⁴³

The author's references to the texts made available by his preceptor in

order to compose his scholastic commentary on the *TS* shed much light on the early sources in general. In all likelihood, the sources known to his preceptor might have been accessible to the author also. However, the *K.Anu* is the better reliable source to go into the heart of the *TS* and to situate its author's ideas in a context.

9. *Anuṣṭhānapaddhati*

The author of the *Anuṣṭhānapaddhati* (*Anu.Pad*) is Vasudeva Somayaji who was supposed to be Keralite, and a contemporary of the author of the *TS* as well as early or contemporary of *Vivaraṇa* and *Vimarśinī* exegetes. The first edition of the *Anu.Pad* appeared in print on Śaka year 1900 and subsequently the second edition on 1906. In its preface it is observed that the description of rituals in the *TS* is given in a particular order that is very difficult for those who are not so well acquainted with tantric rituals. So in the *Anu.Pad* an effort is made to present them from practical point of view. In the text available at present in print the topics ranging from the description of rituals to *Kumbheśapūjā* are presented under seventy-one heads. But it is observed in the preface that the real text ends with the description of *utsava* and the subsequent rituals of consecration are added to it later on by a group of subject experts.¹⁴⁴

He further notes that the *VS*, *KS*, *Lakṣaṇasaṃhitā* etc. are the sources of the *TS*. It is to be noted that the *Lakṣaṇasaṃhitā* as one of the sources of the *TS* is hitherto not referred to by any of writers or commentators of Kerala *tantra*. And throughout the work he cites parallel verses from the *Lakṣaṇasaṃhitā* and other works namely, *KS*, *Īśvarasaṃhitā*, *Viṣṇutilaka*, *Tantrarātna*, *Ākara* etc. to provide additional details on the subject.

IV. *Aṣṭadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s*

1. *Kuzikkāṭṭupacca*

The *KP* is a ritual manual on Kerala temple rituals in Malayalam. In some manuscripts it is also found to be named as *Kuzikkāṭṭubhāṣā*¹⁴⁵. Its authorship is attributed to Kuzikkāṭṭu Śaṅkaran Bhaṭṭatiri. It is the first ritual manual of its kind to appear in print in Malayalam. This is not an original work in real sense but Malayalam prose version of the *TS*. The author states at very outset that his work seeks to describe of rituals of the *TS* in Malayalam language (*bhāṣā*).¹⁴⁶ So readers will not find anything new in the book. After it came in print, it has become a reference guide and sole reliable source to Sanskrit-illiterate practicing priests of Kerala. In addition to elaboration of rituals given in the *TS* it has also given separately all the vedic *mantra*-s related to the concerned rituals in last section.

2. *Tantradarpaṇa*

The *Tantradarpaṇa* is another printed ritual manual on Kerala *tantra* in Malayalam, authored by Maṅgalappiḷi Śaṅkaran Nampūtiripāḍu.¹⁴⁷ It is written as a text book for teaching the students of Thantra Vidya Peedhom (TVP).¹⁴⁸ It was in fact planned to publish in three parts, but the first part alone came in print to the day. The task of publishing the rest two volumes are not undertaken either by the institution itself or any individual practitioners or scholars.

The *Tantradarpaṇa* contains only two chapters and the topics they deal with are ranging from *dehaśuddhi* to *ārāṭṭu* (*tīrthasnāna*) of eight deities namely Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, Gaṇapati, Śāstr, Subrahmaṇya, Durgā and Bhadrakālī. As it is declared by the author in the preface, although it closely follows the *TS* as such, the orders of rituals are slightly changed to be consistent with the curriculum. The methodology followed in the presentation of rituals is first it explains the constituent elements of *laghupūjā* like *dehaśuddhi*, *śaṅkhapūraṇa*, *ātmārādhana* and *pūjā* of Viṣṇu in detail. Then the rituals of other deities are prescribed following *laghupūjā* of Viṣṇu as a referential frame work. In the course of presentation the author consciously intertwines the philosophical implications of specific rituals.

The text is incomplete as it ends by the festive (*utsava*) rituals. The installation and renovation rituals were expected to form the part of the second volume by the writer and publishers. This incompleteness may be a reason for it to be totally neglected and failure to mark its presence in Kerala.

3. *Kainikkarapacca*

The *Kainikkarapacca* is relatively a recent text on Kerala *tantra* written by one of the family members of Kainikkara. It is also known as *Kainikkarabhāṣā*. Since it is written in vernacular it is called as a '*pacca*' or '*bhāṣā*'.¹⁴⁹

The work begins with the details of rituals of *aṅkurāropaṇa* and subsequently it deals with consecration and renovation rituals. While explaining the rituals the author refers to numerous sources. The works cited by the author include *P.Anu*,¹⁵⁰ *T.Anu*,¹⁵¹ *K.Anu*,¹⁵² *Tantraprāyaścitta*¹⁵³ and *PB*.¹⁵⁴ It can be inferred from the list of citations made by the author that he was well aware of the rituals prescribed in these texts. Evidently, he notes down all the variations from his own ritual tradition. In other words, he has cited these works just to distinguish his own tradition from other well known similar traditions. The reference to '*Anuṣṭhānatraya-s*' i.e., *P.Anu*, *T. Anu* and *K.Anu* with special

consideration suggests the extent of influence these texts exerted on the post-*TS* literature and practice. One of the crucial information provided by him is that the authors of the *Tantraprāyaścitta* and the *T.Anu* are the same. Though E.V. has pointed out this fact in his introduction to the *TS* he did not refer to the source there.

4. *Keralīyakṣetratantrakriyāpaddhati*

It is a very recent book in Malayalam language published by Shripuram Tantra Research Centre, Irinjalakkuda.¹⁵⁵ It deals with the installation rituals of eight deities, beginning with that of Śiva and subsequently the variations of rest of the deities are given in short. The remarkable point is that it begins with the description of rituals of initiation. The *PB* is the other ritual manual known to the day beginning in the similar way. The contents are broadly divided into eighteen heads and the topics covered are ranging from *laghupūjā* to vedic *mantra*-s that find room in tantric rituals. The last two sections are devoted to explain the drawing methods and measurements of several *maṇḍala*-s (*Padma* in Malayalam) by citing the corresponding textual sources predominantly from the *TS*. It is distinguished from the *KP* by the order of presentation of contents and absence of temple architectural details.

Vividhadevatāpratiṣṭhātantra-s

1. *Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*

The *ĪŚGP* is a ritual manual of encyclopedic nature and composed by Īśānaśivagurudeva,¹⁵⁶ (12th century A.D.),¹⁵⁷ who is supposed to be a Keralite. The text is also known as the *Tantrapaddhati*. It is an encyclopedic work in true sense and it draws on a great number of texts i.e., around 90 works. And it also refers to around 34 authors by name.¹⁵⁸ Its authority is evidenced from the fact that many of his followers, even non-Keralite authors, profusely quote from it. N.P. Unni puts forth several reasons to consider this as a Keralite treatise and two points which he particularly emphasize in this regard are; reference to i) particular musical instrument of Kerala called '*Timila*' and ii) *Nārāyaṇīya* which he identifies with the *Tantrasārasaṅgraha* of Nārāyaṇa.¹⁵⁹ His first suggestion seems to be problematic at present for two reasons. First, a good critical edition of the text is yet to come. And it has to be confirmed when this particular instrument '*Timila*' was introduced in Kerala and widely started to be used in temples with other instruments. Regarding the second suggestion V.V. Dwivedi raises concerns about the *Nārāyaṇīya*. He expresses his bewilderment by saying that he is yet to find the parallel verses in the text referred to by N.P. Unni.¹⁶⁰ Teun Goudriaan also adds

further by providing additional evidences of *Nārāyaṇīya*'s late origin (15th century A.D.).¹⁶¹ In the absence of the clear evidences it would be wrong to suspect the identity of Īśānaśivagurudeva since there are several Īśānaśiva-s. As Goodall observes:

We need to be especially cautious about identifications when reconstructing the lineages of Saiddāntika authors. Consider the 108 figures in the Airāvateśvara temple in Darasuram that craved on the wall of the northern verandah to the west of *maṇḍapa* in the north-east corner of the *prākāra* [. . .]. For eighty-eight the initiatory names are still legible, and among these eighty-eight there were 24 Īśānaśivas, 19 Aghoraśivas, 9 Tatpuruṣaśivas, 7 Dharmaśivas, 6 Hṛdayaśivas, 4 Sadāśivas, 3 Sadya[h]śivas, and Sūkṣmaśivas, 2 Jñānaśivas, Anantaśivas, Astraśivas and Vairāgyaśivas [. . .].¹⁶²

The *ĪśGP* follows *Āgama*-s in classifying the subjects as into four sections. But the name and order are different. They are (I) *Sāmānyapāda* (1-14 *paṭala*-s) (II) *Mantrapāda* (15-52 *paṭala*-s) (III) *Kriyāpāda* (1-30 *paṭala*-s) and (IV) *Caryāpāda* (31-64 *paṭala*-s) and it also includes *Yogapāda* (3 *paṭala*-s). It is otherwise divided into two viz., *pūrvārdha*-

consisting *Sāmānyapāda* and *Mantrapāda*- and *uttarārdha*- consists of *Kriyāpāda* and *Caryāpāda*.

According to V.V. Dwivedi, inclusion of *pañcāyatana* ritual system is one of the common threads running through all the *Paddhati* literature, *Prapañcasāra* and *Śāradātilaka*. What all authors of *Paddhati* texts had commonly in mind is to establish *smārta* ritual system even strongly among the followers.¹⁶³

2. Śeṣasamuccaya

The *ŚS* deals with the rituals of those deities that are not touched upon by the author of the *TS* and it is written as sequel to it. There are differences of opinion regarding the authorship. Ullūr and Vaṭakkumkūr attribute it to Kṛṣṇaśarman where as Dr. P.K. Narayanan Pillai who edited the work maintains that it is composed by Śaṅkara, son of Nārāyaṇa.

In the very beginning the author declares the names of host of deities whose rituals is the subject matter of the text. The deities are Brahman, Sūrya, Vaiśravaṇa, Kṛṣṇa (Gośālakṛṣṇa), Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Pārvatī, Jyeṣṭhābhagavatī, Bhadrakālī, Saptamātr-s, Kṣetrapāla, Rurujit and Śiva.¹⁶⁴ The consecration and renovation rituals of these deities are explained in ten *paṭala*-s consisting of 1310 stanzas in different metres. It

is necessary to have a firm grounding in the contents and explanation methods of the *TS* to understand the work in its context. Otherwise it will remain a hard nutshell difficult to crack. The *Bahuveravidhāna* seems to be one of the extra subjects added by the author to the rituals that explained in *TS*.

There is a Sanskrit commentary on the same known as *Vimarśinī*.¹⁶⁵ It is believed to have written by the author himself. Just like *Vimarśinī* commentary of the *TS* this one also do not apply higher-level hermeneutical strategies to bring out all the possible interpretations of words and contexts. Taking all these facts into consideration it can be safely concluded that the author of the *ŚS* could be his son Śaṅkara. The sources consulted by the commentator include *Ramākalpa*,¹⁶⁶ *Siddhāntasāra*,¹⁶⁷ *Gaurīpraśna*,¹⁶⁸ *Bhadrapada*¹⁶⁹ *Mā.Sad*,¹⁷⁰ *Vaiśravaṇakalpa*¹⁷¹ and *Prapañcasāra*.¹⁷² So the same sources must have made use of by the author to compose the *ŚS* in addition the *TS* and pre-*TS* liturgies.¹⁷³

Tantraśeṣasamuccayānuṣṭhāna¹⁷⁴

It is a ritual manual which elaborates the rituals of all deities prescribed in the *ŚS* in simple Sanskrit prose. The names of objects used in rituals are given in Malayalam but written in Devanāgarī script. This is a common characteristic of the post-*TS* *Anuṣṭhāna* texts.

These are major texts dealing with installation rituals of popular brahmanical gods. But the list does not end with them. Kerala has produced numerous works on *tantra* that cover all the aspects of domestic and temple ritual practices. Some of them only deal with specific aspects of installation or renovation rituals. There is another variety of ritual manuals that deal with either pre (*prāyaścitta*, *anujñākalaśābhiṣeka* etc.) or post installation rituals (*utsava*). The *Kalaśacandrikā* is such a text which primarily deals with the methods and details of dividing the number of pots (*kalaśaṅkhyā*) and drawing *maṇḍala*-s according to the quantity of pots. The rituals up to *anujñākalaśa*, *utsava* and general system of worship of seven deities form the major contents of the *Kalaśacandrikā*. However, to get a complete picture of peculiarities of ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra* all these works have to be subjected to careful reading and comparison.

Given below are other important works believed to have been written by Kerala authors but they did not find entry in the above list. Some of them still remain very influential and even pre-date some of *Pratiṣṭhātantra*-s. They are *Prapañcasāra*,¹⁷⁵ *Bahudaivatya*,¹⁷⁶ *Devodbhava*¹⁷⁷ *Gopālānuṣṭhānakrama*,¹⁷⁸ *Rahasyagopālatantracintāmaṇī*,¹⁷⁹ *Tantraprāyaścitta*,¹⁸⁰ *Cakrahomakalpa*,¹⁸¹ *Śrīkṛṣṇatantra*,¹⁸² *Skandānu-*

ṣṭhānasaṅgraha,¹⁸³ *Nṛttaraṅgajīrṇoddhāra*,¹⁸⁴ *Tantrasāra*,¹⁸⁵ *Mantrasā-*
ra,¹⁸⁶ *Durgānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅgraha*, *Ratnāvalī*, *Jīrṇoddhāra*, *Tantrānu-*
ṣṭhānakrama, *Bimbalakṣaṇa*, *Puṣpāñjalīvidhāna*, *Kalaśacandrikā*, *Dvā-*
daśyārādhana, *Prayogaratnamālā*, *Prayogasāra*,¹⁸⁷ *Dhvajapraṭiṣṭhāvidhi*,
Śāstrpūjākrama, *Saparivāram pūjakal* (Malayalam),¹⁸⁸ *Viṣṇuśāstrpū-*
jākrama, *Raktacāmuṇḍīkalpa*, *Kṣetrapālajīrṇoddhāra*, *Ramākalpa* and
Bhadrāpada.

Notes

¹ Usually, the study of tantric rituals starts with learning simple form of rituals and then proceeds to complex ones. But many of the ritual manuals produced in Kerala begin with either rituals of a new temple construction or renovation rituals.

² The texts that came in print so far do not exceed a dozen works. They are the *VS*, *ĪŚGP*, *TS*, *Śeṣasamuccaya*, *Kuzikkāṭṭupacca*, *Tantradarpaṇa*, *Kainikkarapacca* and *Keraḷīyakṣetratantrakriyāpaddhati*.

³ So far the texts of Kerala *tantra* are classified into pre and post-*TS* ritual manuals. Dr. Sangamesan distinguishes the characteristics of pre and post-*TS* manuals in his Ph.D thesis titled "*Prayogamañjarī of Ravi- A Critical Study*" as "In the post Tantrasamuccaya period texts concentrate on the practical side of Tantric rituals neglecting the philosophical and Mythological aspects of *tantra*. On the other hand in the pre *TS* period the authors of Tantric treatises give due importance to philosophical and mythological aspects also."P.20.

This statement calls for a reconsideration. Because in the *Anuṣṭhāna* texts, that postdate the *TS*, the philosophical implications of rituals are well described by following the lead of the *TS*, especially its *Vivaraṇa* commentator. The spectrum of philosophical postulations varies considerably between pre and post- *TS* texts.

The reason here to attempt for an alternative model of classification is the range of pre and post- *TS* ritual manuals are not yet ascertained. Until we are able to place major influential texts in a historical context, we cannot predict for sure the common characteristic of pre and post- *TS* texts.

⁴ In fact the *Pratiṣṭhātantra*-s belong to a different category and as the name suggests their primary concern is to lay down installation rituals alone. But in the context of Kerala ritual manuals such texts often deal with a package of rituals ranging from construction of a temple to expiation rituals. Some texts only deal with renovation rituals yet they are also included into this category.

⁵ It has been published as series in the quarterly Journal of Ravivarman Samskrita Granthavali, Sanskrit college, Tripunithura by C.K Raman Nambiar during the years 1953-54. N.P. Unni, Tantra Literature of Kerala, p.102. There are several manuscripts of *PM* in Trivandrum Manuscript Library (Nos.

L.530, L. 674, T. 20, 5439, C. 1769 A, C.693, C.730 and T. 413.). Manuscripts of the same are found also in Adayar Library and Research Centre (Ms.No. 68567), and OML, TVM (21922 A, 14618 A, 16313 A, 16552 B).

- ⁶ The author himself provides the information about himself and his lineage in the text itself in the following verses.

*śivapurasadgrāmabhuvā vidhyarpitasomapānaśuddhena /
kāśyapagotrābhuvā māṭharakulābjavanahaṃsena // XXI.93 //*
*campātaṭākamanoharatīrārāmaśāstṛguptena /
prathitabhavatrātakuladhvajabhūtenāṣṭamūrtibhuvā // 94 //*
*raviṇā harapadābjabhṛṅgeṇa racitā kṛtiḥ /
prayogamañjarī nāma saṅkṣepakusumojjvalā // 95 //*

(Being born in the Village Śivapura, he finds himself lucky to have purified by drinking the *Soma* juice being offered in sacrifice conducted strictly following the rules. He belongs to Kāśyapagotra of Brahmins and born in Māṭharakula. He got protection at the benevolent hands of God Sāsta consecrated at the temple located at Cempātaṭākātīrārāma identified with the present Cemparakulangara shrine which is just three miles north of Mankara Railway station in the Northern district of Kerala. Bhavatrata was his predecessor and he is born to Aṣṭamūrti.) (*Tantra Literature of Kerala*, pp. 104-5.). But Dr. Sangamesan has challenged identity of the author in his Ph.D thesis. He has found out that the Māmaṇṇu family belongs to *Āṅgirasabharadvāja Gotra* whereas the author clearly mentions his belongingness to *Kāśyapagotra*. The actual Māmaṇṇu family is of *Sāmavedin*-s and they do not have an ancestral history of tantric preceptors. On the contrary, he was able to trace out the author's ancestry to Kizmunter family situated in Muntur in Tṛṣṣūr District. See pp.72-78.

- ⁷ N.P. Unni, *op. cit.*, p.105.

- ⁸ Sangamesan, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

- ⁹ *durjñeyāni bahūni mandamatibhistrāṇi gaurīpate-
rudgīrṇāni mukhāmbujādavikalāstvekatra teṣāṃ kriyāḥ /
noktāstena śivāgamāṃśca sakalānudvīkṣya tāstāḥ kriyāḥ
saṅkṣipyā pravādāmi yāśca vihitā liṅgapraṭiṣṭhāvidhau // I.6*
¹⁰ *sauvarṇe tvatha ṣoḍaśāṅgulamite pātrethavā rājate*

tāmevājyamato bhīghārya haviṣā mūlena liṅgākṛtim /
 kṛtvā dvādaśarudradigvasubhidābhinnairmitaṃ cāṅgulai-
 rviprādiṣvatha varṇabhedavihitam sājyaṃ dadhikleditam // 20
 nyastvā kāñjanamasya mūrdhni hṛdayenāvāhya sampūjayet –
 gandhādyairvinidhāya śiṣyaśirasi dhyātvā vṛṣantaṃ punaḥ /
 soṣṇīṣajvalitottarīyavasanaṃ grhṇīyuranye tadā
 sacchatradhvajadhūpadīpakusumādyannam jalam candanam // 21

¹¹ The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala, p.323.

¹² S.A.S Sarma observes "The earlier Śaiva texts while prescribing the āvaraṇapūjā gave only one circuit that of Vidyeśvaras (e.g. Prtiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya 6:8-12) and the later texts came up with more āvaraṇas. (tribhirāvaraṇairvāpi ekenāvaraṇena vā . saptaviṃśatyāvaraṇair yathāśakti samarcayet (Pūrva Kāmika 4:188). Many of the siddhāntatantras transmitted in the south prescribe the five circuit worship; these include the Brahmamantras and Aṅgamantras as the first āvaraṇa; Vidyeśvaras as the second one; Gaṇeśvaras as the third one; Lokapālas as the fourth one and fifth as the weapons of Lokapālas. Thus one will find the place of brahmamantras in the first circuit and most of the texts provide the visualization of the five mantras while describing the āvaraṇa. But the Somaśambhupaddhati which follows the tradition of the Dviśatikātaottara excludes brahmamantras in its grābhāvaraṇa.' *The Pañcabrahmamantra-s and its application in the Śaiva Literature*, p.5.

¹³ XVI. 56-67.

¹⁴ Textual references show that it is also called as *Prayogamañjarīvivaraṇa*; for instance, *iti pradyote prayogamañjarī vivaraṇe pañcamah patalah*, p.23; *iti prayogamañjarīvivaraṇam samāptam* p.330. There are several manuscripts of *Pradyota* in Trivandrum manuscript library; Mss. Nos. T.713, C.693, C. 730, 20117, 14618.

¹⁵ The author furnishes details as following in the opening verses;

ārdrapādakulotbhūtanārāyaṇatanūdbhavaḥ /
 trivikramohaṃ mañjaryāṃ vyākhyāṃ kurve yathāśrutam // and also at the end
 of the commentary;
 nikhilāgamasārārtha prayogamañjaryagādhakamalinyāḥ /
 prasṛtāstrivikramākhyā vyākhyā pradyota eva bodhāya //

- 16 KSC, Vol.I, p.201 and Vol.II, p.351ff.
- 17 Sangamesan, *op.cit.*, pp.142-43.
- 18 *ibid.*,p.143.
- 19 Venkitasubrahmonia Iyer refers to a Trivikrama as author of *Vijñānabodhinī* but never relates him with the author of *Pradyota*. So did the Vaṭakumkūr and he quote several verses from it. KSSC, Vol. II, p.598;
- 20 Sangamesan, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-56.
- 21 N.P. Unni., *op. cit.*, p. 220.
- 22 There are several manuscripts of the *ŚN* available in several libraries and individual collections. Trivandrum Manuscript Library Ms. No.18818-22; University of Calicut Manuscript Library (Malayalam Department) Ms.No.2433; French Institute, Pondicherry Ms.No.T.379; Puliyanur Mana Ms.No.108 and Tarananallur Ms.No. 177A.
- 23 see I.49, III.65, 75, 97, 103, 105, 112, 125 133, 142, 144, 150, 163, 246, 249, 262, 264; IV.366, 373, 433, 438, 450, 463, 465 and 475. See for more details V. Dvivedi, *Nigamāgamīyaṃ darśanam*, pp.189-90.
- 24 *proktaṃ prayogamañjaryāṃ pauṣkare ca nibandhane* / XVI.3.
- 25 The manuscripts/ transcripts of which are available in IFP. T.No. 578; and Vezappaṛambu Mana (not catalogued).
- 26 Among the scholars on Kerala *tantra* E.V Rāman Nampūtiri, N.P. Unni, Dr. Sangamesan, Dr. Jayan Erancherry etc. do not mention the *PP* in their works. It seems that they are not aware of the importance of the *PP* at all.
- 27 IFP T.No. 587, p.7.
- 28 IFP T.No.587, p.27.
- 29 p.30.
- 30 *dharmaṃ rakta vṛṣākāraṃ jñānaṃ śyāmamṛgādhipam /*
vairāgyaṃ pītabhūtaṃ syādaiśvaryaṃ vāraṇaṃ sitam // p.30 //
- Same line is found in the *PM* and it had been quoted by the *Vivaraṇakāra*.
- 31 *āvāhyahṛdayādīśaṃ dīpāddīpaṃ yathā thatā /*
ādāyāñjali padme tu suṣumnā randhramārgataḥ // p.31 //
- The other texts to describe the same system of invocation are the *TS* and the *Parameśvarānuṣṭhāna*.
- 32 *annaśeṣaṃ ca nirmālyaṃ caṇḍeśāya nivedayet* p.38; Goodall observes that in the early texts of *Śaivasiddhānta* " it is often not made explicit whether or not

a Caṇḍapūjā should follow ordinary regular worship (*nityapūjā*), for Caṇḍa is commonly simply not mentioned." He further notes that among the pre-12th century Saiddhāntika scriptures the *Kiraṇa* briefly mentions offering *nirmālya* to Caṇḍa after regular worship. (*liṅgamadhyagataṃ dhyātvā devadevaṃ sadāśīvaṃ / naivedyaṃ copasaṃhṛtya kṣīpec caṇḍāya tat punaḥ* // 14: 46c-47b. see *Who is Caṇḍeśa?*, p. 311 fn.103.

33 *caṇḍālaṃ vā śvapākaṃ nāvamanyeta yoginam na buddhibhedaṃ janayet bhaktānāṃ bhagavadpade* / p.45

34 *liṅgāt prākāraparyantāṃ bhūtiṃ dhyāyet guṇātmikāṃ / tañcaiva guṇabījēna liṅge vidyātmake nayet //*

vāgureṇa yathā matsyān punar binduṃ ravātmani //

nādaṃ śaktyā puna śśaktiṃ vilāpya paramātmāni /

cchitvā jñānakūṭhāreṇa tatparaṃ kalaśe nayet // p. 96 //

35 *prasārya saṃvyāptamidam bahiṣṭha prākāraṇiṣṭhaṃ parikalpya tena //* XXI. 43 //

grastaṃ samastaṃ parivārajātaṃ jālena mīnāniva saṃvibhāvya /

puṣpāñjaliṃ saṃhṛti mudrayā'tra kurvan samāhṛtya tataḥ krameṇa // 44 //

36 According to Ullūr (KSSC, Vol.III, p.474) and Vaṭakkumkūr (KSC. Vol.II. p.316) it is originally written by a Viṣṇu.

37 He has made clear his identity in the VS as following;

sumatirnāma baidoham ṛṣeridhmavataḥ sutaḥ /

One of the commentators of the VS, Nārāyaṇa explicates the above line as follows;

sumatirnāmetyādi āha- sumatirnāma idhmavataḥ ṛṣessutaḥ sumatiriti śobhanābālatvepi viṣṇuviśayaṭvāt tādrśī matiryasya iti pitrā sumatirnāma kṛta ityarthah. baidah vidasya munīndrasya gotre jātaḥ. vettīti vidaḥ sarvajña iti yāvat /

Another commentator Nāgasvāmin explains the same line as;

ahaṃ sumatirnāma baido bidagotrājaḥ/ tatra kasya putra iti cēt idhmavataḥ ṛṣessutaḥ. sāṅgeṣu vedeṣu tantreṣu ca kṛtaśrama ityanena śraute smārte kṛtaśramaḥ / (Tantra Literature of Kerala, pp. 36-37.)

38 Other than following the four-fold classification (*jñānacaryākriyāyogaśubhāpādacatuṣṭayam*. I.34) detailed discussion on different forms of Vāsudeva and

other topics that generally feature in the *Pāñcarātra* treatises find place in the VS also.

See N.P.Unni, *op. cit.*, pp.349-58.

I am indebted to S.A.S Sarma for drawing my attention to this aspect. It is not in practice in Kerala. It is ritual by making a *maṇḍala* by various colors of flowers and after its completion Viṣṇu is invoked into it and worshipped. It is described in the VS in the context of *utsava*; see XX. 65-77.

TS. No. 439, OML,TVM.

Ullūr, *op.cit*, Vol. II. p.316.

T. No.445.

The following details are given based on a single manuscript IFP, T.NO. 850.

Vaṭakkumkūr, KSSC, III.p.489; S.V. Iyyer, KSLB, p. 110, Ullūr, KSC, II, pp.316-17, Venkitasubrahmonia Iyer p.110, N.P. Unni, p. 279.

Dr. E. Esvaran Nambootiri, *Sanskrit Literature of Kerala*, Ms. No. 1044.

Discriptive catalogue of the Curator Office library, Trivandrum, Ms. No. 868 B.

Venkitasubrahmonia Iyer, *op. cit.*, p.110.

The same text but a different manuscript referred to by N.P Unni consists of twenty *paṭala*-s. See p.279.

*karmaśeṣānaḥ vakṣye prasaktānukta karmasu /
nirvodduḥ naiva śakyante vinā yairuditāḥ kriyāḥ* // XVIII. 1.

*viṣṇor mukhādabhivyaktaḥ śāsanam pāñcarātrikam /
niṣasṛtya tadācāryaiḥ praṇītā bahubhiḥ sphuṭam //
tantrāgamā ye sarvebhyaḥ tebhyaḥ kurmo namaskriyām /
tattatkriyāsāra iti prasiddham tantraśāsanam //
śivādi sapta mūrtīnām sthāpanādi vidhāya ca /
tatratyam vaiṣṇavam bhāgam āśritya nikhilāḥ kriyāḥ //
saṃgrhyante yatosmābhiḥ tatkriyā saṅgrahāhvayam /*

II. p.7, 11, III. pp.26, 28.

III. p.15, III. 29, IV.p. 42.

III. P. 20, IV. pp.32, 41,193.

IV. p.21 and 190.

III. p. 27, IV. p.40.

IV. p.36, IV. p. 43.

- 58 IV, p. 41.
 59 p.80 and 195.
 60 p.148.
 61 p.184.
 62 p. 193.
 63 p. 194.
 64 T.No. 850.
 65 p. 68.
 66 TVM manuscript Library catalogue records two manuscripts (1017a, 13377) in its possession. Another manuscript of it is found in Madras government Manuscript library (Mss. No. r5126 sr. 2563). The chapters are said to have divided as following;
ācāryalakṣaṇādyantu jīrṇoddhārāvasānakam
anukramamiti prāhurasmin tantre vicakṣaṇāḥ
ācāryalakṣaṇaṅcaiva prthivyāśca viśodhanam
adhivāsakramantāsā
vāstuyāgavidhānaṅca tataḥ prāsādalakṣaṇam
ādhānamīṣṭakāyāśca garbhādhānamanantaram
pratimālakṣaṇaṅcaiva dīkṣākālpamataḥparam
bījīropanakalpaṅca baliṃ tatraiva pūjanā
jalādhivāsaṃ bimbānāṃ teṣāṅcaiva viśodhanam
adhivāsakramam tāsāṃ pratimānaṃ tathaiva ca
ratnanyāsavidhānaṅca pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇam tathā
arcanāyāvidhānaṅca snapanaṃ cotsavakramam
tīrthābhiṣekagamaṇam snapanaṅcāpyanantaram
jīrṇoddhāraṅca tantrajñāḥ prāhurevamanukramamam // p.2.
 67 *pravakṣyāmi samāsenā tantram nārāyaṇātmacam //*
vāstusaṅgrahamārabhya tīrthasnanāvasānikam /
karmakāṇḍe tu nirdiṣṭam tadidānīmihocyate // p.1.
 68 *bhagavannalpagehesmin vāsaḥ kleśopi te hare //*
vastavyo bhagavaṃstāvadyāvad geḥaḥ samāpyate /
kārakasya parāmṛddi manuḥjānanmahodayām //
bhaktānāmanukambārthaṃ iha tvam sthātumarhasi / p.69.

- 69 *aum namoṣṭakulanāgabhūṣaṇāya nāgaṣoṇitaliptāṅgāya saptapātālavāsijana-
vikṣobhaṇakarāya*pp.64-65.
- 70 *tilapuṣpākṣatāmbhobhiḥ pūrayitvātra vardhanīm //*
acchinnadhārayā siñcet apasavyaṃ tridhāmbubhiḥ / p.69.
- 71 See pp. 87-95. *jīva mantra- oṃ śrīṃ hrīṃ kṣrīṃ hrūṃ ghrūṃ śambarāya
padmane svāhā* p.87, pp.89-90 repetition, *aṅgamantra* of Śāsta is different see
p.92, *ṣaṇmantra* p.92, *aṣṭākṣaramantra- aum raṃ jvalajvala huṃ phaṭ* p.92,
the *ṣoḍaśākṣaramantra-oṃ hrīṃ śāstre namo goptre bhūtādhipataye
namaḥ*..p.92, then *caturdaśākṣaramantra..92, śāntihoma* p.94, after
kalaśābhīṣeka- nāgamantreṇa sambudhyā prāsādaṃ parīśodhayet // *oṃ nāṃ
rāṃ gāṃ nāgātmane parāya paramātmane namo veṣṭayāmi rakṣa rakṣa huṃ
phaṭ*, p. 94.
- 72 *haraṃ ca mahākāyaṃ mahākālaṃ sulocanam /*
dīrghabāhuṃ mahānādam ūrdhvakeśam adhomukham //
prabhāṃ pūrṇāṃ satyakaṃ ca puṣkalāmuttarāditaḥ /
skandaṃ senāpatiṃ sūraṃ vighneśam analādiṣu //
then *aṅga*,
kṣurikāṃ pūrvatobhyarcya dakṣiṇe khaḍgameva ca /
dhanuṣaṃ paścimebhyarcya bāṇamuttaratorcayet //
koṇeṣu tomarantveva pīṭhīye dikcatuṣṭaye /
madhukaraṃ bahiḥ pīṭhaṃ diśecāgnau tu śambaram // p.98
- 73 *dvārapala-s* are different *siṃhāsya* and *siṃhanāda*, p.107.
- 74 *mahānādaṃ mahākālaṃ bhūtanāthaṃ mahābalaṃ //*
yakṣaṃ dakṣaṃ viśālākṣaṃ rudravaktraṃ bhavodbhavaṃ p.108—*vīrabāhu*,
mahāvīra, *vidyuddanta* etc. in the *TS*.
- 75 *utsavabali-* difference *vāhana-ṛṣabhāyanamḥ, pakṣavikṣobhavitṛasta
garudāyanamḥ* p.124 (*vṛṣāya garudātmane namaḥ-* in *TS*), next difference in
*sabhādvāsthamantra-s- hrīṃkaryai namaḥ, śrīṃkaryai namaḥ, śūlāya namaḥ,
cakrāya namaḥ* (*umā, śrī, cakra, śaṅkha* in *TS*) p.124, *ye
samastam..rudrapārṣadā.. nandine namaḥ, vimśad bhūtagaṇebhyaḥ, on
baliyabalikkallu- āyāntu śāṅkarāḥ sarve vaiṣṇavā iha / gr̥hṇantu parituṣṭāste
baliṃ tebhyo namo namḥ* (*āyāntu pārṣadāssarve śāṅkarāvaiṣṇavāstathā
balipīṭhetra santuṣṭā nivasantu yathā sukham-TS*).
- 76 The manuscripts are available in OML, TVM, Ms. No. T520; IFP, T.No. 78.

77 KSC, Vol. I, p.203.

78 Kṛṣṇa is visualized as holding a slightly bent staff and conch in right and left hands respectively.

tadvārayuktyā pratimāṃ bālabhāvasamanvitām //
dvibhujāṃ dakṣiṇe pāṇau vakrāṃ yaṣṭim prakalpayet /
vāmaṃ tu kaṭimālambya saśaṅkhaṃ kalpayet bhujam //
śikhipiṅchasamāyukta baddha keśāṃ manoramām /
kuṇḍalṃ makarākhyāṅca karṇamudrākhyāṅca karṇayoḥ //
kalpayedratnasamyukta karṇābharaṇa samyutām /
ardhorupītavaśanāṃ lambitāgrāṃ manoramām //
rgupādāṃ manāgvakracaraṇāṃ sarvabhūṣaṇaiḥ /
bhūṣitāṃ bālabhāvāḍhyāṃ mano nayana hāriṇīm //

Here in the IFP manuscript it is read as '*cakraṃ yaṣṭim prakalpayet.*' This is in all probability might be a scribal error. If not so, it is taken to mean he holds both *cakra* and staff in the right hand. It finds no support in other sources. Whereas, the other reading finds support in the *dhyānaśloka* of Kṛṣṇa given in ŚS (III. 100). It is identical with verses given above.

79 T.No. 934 Institute Francaise Indologie, Pondichery copied from a manuscript belonging to Narayanan Kunju Nampoothirippadu, Ernakulam. It is incomplete as it ends with 15th *paṭala*. In it the author had quoted the works like *Dīpadīpikā*, *Sumatisaṃhitā*, *NĀ* and *PP*. Sangamesan p.29.

80 The copies are available in OML, TVM No. C 712, C 2413, C 2543, TM 364 & 366.

81 The following data is presented based on a single manuscript procured from IFP, T.No. 825.

82 pp.174, 193.

83 p.193.

84 N.P Unni mentions a ritual manual named *Śivānuṣṭhānakalāpasaṅgraha* of Gartavanaśaṅkara. He has furnished the details on the content of text based on the details given in Descriptive Catalogue of Curator Office library, Vol. VI, p. 2366. The beginning verses that he has quoted from the manuscript are not found in IFP transcript. And also the passage cited that attests the author's detail. See p.332.

85 pp. 114, 118,138, 153, 156.

- 86 p. 192
 87 pp. 133, 142.
 88 pp. 17-18.
 89 p.19.
 90 p. 25.
 91 pp.28-29.
 92 p.30.
 93 p.36.
 94 p.62.
 95 p.91.
 96 pp.124-127.
 97 pp.178-79.
 98 p. 240.
 99 See p.3 in reprint edition 1988.
 100 In one of his articles entitled '*Is Tantrasamuccaya an Original Work?*' N.V.P. Unithiri tried to establish that the *TS* is almost an exact translation of the *PB*. This is based on the premise that the *PB* predates the *TS*. Other than following the line of argument of Kanippayur Sankaran Nambootiripad, Unithiri does not provide any substantial additional evidence proving the *PB*'s pre-existence. It is known that the Puṭayūr family has another recension of the *PB* in their manuscript collection. It is to be checked before making any conclusive statement whether which is the early one.
- 101 This is a published work and edited thrice by different scholars. see N.P Unni, *op. cit.*, pp.254-55 for details of these editions.
- 102 There are three families known by the name Cennas in Northern Malabar of which all are said to be equally proficient and claiming to have credited with history of many great tantric preceptors. But it is postulated that the author of the *TS* hails from Vanneri family but it is extinct now. See E.V's introduction to the *TS* and N.P. Unni pp. 228-29 for difference of opinion among scholars regarding the date and identity of Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiripāḍu.
- 103 *kalyabdeṣvatiyatsu nandanayananeṣvaṃbhodhi saṃkhyeṣu yaḥ*
saṃbhūto bhṛguvīṭahavyamuniyuṇmūle savedonvaye / XII. 215.
- 104 The assembly of eighteen and half consisted of nine members from Payyūr family, five from Thiruveappura (Asokapura) region Mullappalli Bhaṭṭatiri,

Uddaṇḍa Śāstri, Kāṅkaśseri Dāmodarabhaṭṭa, Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri and Punam Nampūtiri. The last one is considered to be a half poet since he was more proficient in vernacular poetic compositions.

¹⁰⁵ This is an unpublished work dealing with construction details of temples and idols. N.P Unni observes that out of 171 stanzas noted in manuscript available to him 140 verses are parallel to the *TS* and just 31 verses are added in addition. *op.cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁶ Domestic architecture is the subject matter of this work. It said to be just another compilation from the author's part. There is also another work by the same title. But the one referred to can be easily distinguished from the other by looking at the introductory verse as it begins with '*praṇāmya viśvasthapatim pitāmahaṃ.*' The other evidence shown by E.V Rāman Nampūtiri to establish the identity of the author is the statement of a Sanskrit commentator of *Manuṣyālayacandrikā*. He notes "*ayaṃ kaviḥ, mayā tatra samuccaye devālayalakṣaṇamuktaṃ, manuṣyālaya lakṣaṇam kuṭrāpi noktam ca tasmādidānīṃ tantrasamuccayāt katipayapadyāni yathāvakāśamuddhṛtya taiḥ saha catuṣcatvāriṃśatbhiḥ ślokaḥ manuṣyālayalakṣaṇaṃ vakṣyāmīti niścītya tatrādaḥ prathamena ślokena iṣṭdevatānamaskāraṃ cikīrṣitapratijñāṃ ca āha.*" He puts forth additional information that he has seen a vernacular commentary on the same and the author of the *TS* must be author of this one too. See p. 59.

¹⁰⁷ *śrīśeṣa seṣahari sumbhajidāmbikeya vighneśa bhūtapatināma vibhinnabhūmnaḥ /*
vakṣye parasya puruṣasya samānarūpa marcāvidhim saha prṭhak ca viśeṣayuktam // I. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Published with text Part I, TSS 67, 1919; Part II, TSS 71, 1921.

¹⁰⁹ Published along with the text and *Vimarśinī* commentary Part I, TSS 151, 1945; Part II, TSS 169, 1958; Part III TSS 200, 1962. The text along with two commentaries is now available for free download in the website www.Shripuram.org.

¹¹⁰ E.V observes that the author of *Vivaraṇa* commentary belonged to Kainikkara Kalady family of brahmins who are settled near Guruvayoor. Earlier it was known, as 'Kazhanikkara' and they were known to be authorities on vedic customs and practices in addition to tantric one. He further postulates that

both of these commentators appear to be contemporaries but not peers in the sense that who got educated at the same period under the same preceptor. And it is also doubtful that whether there had been any close contact between them. Moreover, both of them were writing from different geographical regions namely the author of *Vimarśinī* from Northern and the other from Southern Kerala. This accounts for the differences of opinion prevalent between them that reflect throughout their commentaries. Ullūr, Vol.II, p.74; E.V, pp. 58-59.

111 He quotes from *Kāśyapīya*, *Mayamata*, *PM*, *ĪŚGP*, *VS*, *KS*, *ŚN*, *Skandasadbhāva*, *PP*, *Sātvatasamhitā* and *Prapañcasāra*.

112 These differences are well noted by the authors of *Anuṣṭhāna*-s i.e., *Parameśvarānuṣṭhāna*, *Tozānūranuṣṭhāna* and *Karuttapārānuṣṭhāna*.

113 Published with text in three parts-Part I, Trivandrum Malayalam Series, No.64, *paṭala*-s 1-4, 1941; Part II, TMS 66, *paṭala*-s 5-8, 1942; Part III, TMS 68, *paṭala*-s 9-12, 1945.

114 p. 98.

115 *kriyāleśa smṛtiścaīṣā sarveṣāmupakāriṇī /*
svalpAGRanthā subodhā ca sarvānuṣṭhāna sūcanī //
likhitā nīlakaṇṭhena sarvānugrahabuddhinā /
guroḥ prasādalavato devatānām prasādatḥ // cited from N.P. Unni, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

116 *viṣṇu durgā śiva skanda vighna śāstr harācyutān /*
natvā tān pūjādīni likhyate śāstraleśataḥ // *idem*.

117 *bījāṅkurāṇi śuddhiśca veśmanaḥ sthānabimbayoḥ /*
niṣkṛtiḥ snapanam pūjā baliścotsava eva ca //
tīrthayātreṭi karmāṇi likhitāni samāsataḥ /
viṣṇvādīnām tu saptānām tattacchāstrodītāni vai // *ibid.*, P. 278.

118 There are numerous manuscripts of *P. Anu* found in OML, TVM nos. C. 373 B, L. 672, C. 2288, T. 1045 and in the manuscript collections of Vezapparambu Mana, Aṇḍalāḍi Mana. Here the IFP. T. No. 855 is used mainly for following discussions.

119 This information is provided by Aṇḍalāḍi Parameswaran Namboothiri and his father Divakaran Namboothiri in a private conversation.

120 One of the remarkable points in this regard is the statement that the deity has to be invoked from the heart (*hr̥dpadma*, '*svakarābhyāmañjalīnā*

puṣpagandhajalaṃ grhītvā praṇavatrayamuccārya hṛdayapadmasthitaṃ caitanyaṭ' p.187). The same is found in the *TS* (*tāratrayaṃ calana saṅgrahaṇodgamārtha muktavopacāranutikṛnnija hṛtsarojāt* / VII.61) although *Vivaraṇakāra* inclines to consider *hṛdaya* to be taken as an *upalakṣaṇa* of *mūlādhāra*. '*hṛtsarojagrahaṇaṃ mūlādhārapadmavikalpopalakṣaṇaṃ*.'

¹²¹ N.P Unni notes that it deals with the worship of eight deities. It is not correct. The reason for this misapprehension seems to be the incorrect reading of the verses that he quotes from the text. He has mistakenly split the word '*śaṅkaranārāyaṇaṃ*' into '*śaṅkarṇa*' and '*nārāyaṇaṃ*' and it does not fit to this context. And above all, the text deals with the worship of only of seven deities. See N.P.Unni, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

¹²² For example; the verses in the pp. 129-30 are cited from *KS*.

¹²³ For example; the author mentions four ways of setting the materials for *śuddhi* ritual. He finishes his observations in the different *pakṣa*-s as '*athavā sarṣapādīni dravyāṇi. ubhayapakṣe avasāne vā vikiraṃ iti catvāra pakṣāḥ*.' p. 37 (in IFP. TS).

¹²⁴ In the beginning of the last section he provides some crucial information regarding his location. But that is yet to be deciphered.

*jharjharīṭiravāksthāna sthāṇunāthālayādiṣu /
sānnidhya vṛdhaye nityodyuktvā vande dvijottamān //
śrīmad kalpaka gehākhyā jagad siddhayaśāśśriyām /
teṣāmevājñāyā kaścinniṣkṛtiṃ vipupūṣate //*

¹²⁵ N.P. Unni. *op. cit.*, pp. 274-75; see also S. Venkitasubrahmonia Iyer, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹²⁶ *atra induprakṛti samarpaṇe bhūyo naivedyasāra ityādi ślokārdha vyākhyāne vivaraṇe bahavo mantrāḥ bahūyanuṣṭhānāni bhāvanāni ca santi / tatsarvam vibhajya jñātum vaktum ca mahān prayāsaḥ. tasamāttadvivaraṇaṇica bahūnāgamāmśca saparyāsaptakopahāraprakāśikādīmśca parakroḍānuṣṭhānādi ca punaḥ punaravalokya niscitya paramakṛpālunā guruṇā yat mamopadiṣṭaṃ tadevātra mayā likhitaṃ iti janairavagandavyaṃ. In another instance he salutes his teachers once again.*

*māṭṛdattatanayaṃ sākṣānnārāyaṇaṃ param /
māṭṛdattābhidānaṇca gurukāruṇyabhājanam //
kṛṣṇākhyāncājñatāhetu pāpa pūga vidāraṇam /*

namāmi namanīyāṅghrīn gurūnetānaharnniśam //

127 The text begins as;

*viṣṇu śambhu hariśambhu subhājicchaktidhrggaṇapaśāstr mūrtibhiḥ /
yajvanāmbhīmatārthadāyine nandajāya paramātmāne namaḥ //*

The seven deities are Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, Durgā, Subrahmaṇya, Gaṇapati and Śāstr.

128 N.P Unni enlists twelve works as have been mentioned by the author. Among them *Upahāraprakāśa*, *Parakroḍānuṣṭhāna*, *Saparyāsaptaka* are mentioned only in the context of referring the sources his teacher had made use of while writing the *Vivaraṇa* commentary.

129 It is evident from the verses given in beginning of the work.

*śrīpārvatīnandana eṣa kaścīt nnārāyaṇākṛtyo dvija bālakotra /
viṣṇvādi devārcana lolacetā likhatyaśeṣaṃ varaṇādi karma //* N.P. Unni, *op. cit.*, p.273.

130 C. 898, T. 851, L.659 B, L.660 A, C. 1313, T. 975.

131 *Tantrasamuccayokta kriyākramaḥ*, T.No. 898.

132 *viṣṇu śambhu hariśambhu subhājicchaktidhṛ ggaṇapa śāstr mūrtibhiḥ /*

133 See following pages 7, 20, 24, 124, 212, 214, 221, 278, 281, 310, 405, 430, 501 in IFP. T. No. 898.

134 See pp., 23, 24.

135 The *Paddhati* mentioned by the author may be the *ĪśGP*. This is yet to be confirmed. See pp. 27, 225, 255, 302, 446.

136 pp. 127, 479.

137 pp. 368, 423, 444, 446, 447, 479.

138 pp. 368, 445, 447.

139 p. 446.

140 p. 447.

141 p. 449.

142 The evidences are (i) to the preceptors he pays tribute include Kṛṣṇa also. Cf., *susamāvṛtadhīnetramajñānapaṭalaṃ mahat / kṛpayā yaḥ kṛṣati taṃ vande kṛṣṇābhidaṃ gurum //* (ii) *vivaraṇe bahūnyanuṣṭhānāni bahvyo bhāvanāśca santi. tatsarvam vijbhājya vaktuṃ jñātuṃ mahān prayāsaḥ iti vivaraṇaṃ bahūnāgamān saparyāsaptakopahāraprakāśikādīn parakrodhānuṣṭhānādīn ca*

*punaḥ punaravalokya niścītya paramakṛpālunā guruṇāyaṃ mamopadiṣṭaṃ
tadevātra mayā likhitaṃ iti janairavagandavyam..p.275.*

143 According to E.V, the author's preceptor in all probability must be the exegete Kṛṣṇa. But N.P. Unni does not agree with former's views. The evidences he puts forth against are "Firstly, the Vivaraṇa does not mention the name of its author, and even if it is taken to be Kṛṣṇa, the Guru of our author must have been a different person; for though the Vivaraṇa is referred to several times in our work, nowhere it is mentioned as the work of the author's Guru. In one place our author observes that his Guru taught him after a thorough examination of Vivaraṇa and several other works, thereby indicating that the author of the Vivaraṇa is different from him". But internal evidences prove E.V was right.

144 *tatra paraśurāmakṣetre paścimaparvatapradeśeṣu ca viṣṇusaṃhitā
kriyāsāralakṣaṇasaṃhitādyaneḥkāgamaparyālocanayā keraḷaviduṣā
nārāyaṇabhaṭṭena racitaṃ tantrasamuccayamāśrityānuṣṭhīyate
ityapyatirohitam / prāyaśaḥ ayaṃ tantrasamuccayavyākhyādvayapūrvā-
kāḷīnaḥ samakālīno vā āsan.*

145 The three manuscripts of the same that found in the collections of Vatakke Puliyannur Mana are designated as *Kuzikkāṭṭubhāṣā*.

146 The beginning benedictory verse is as following;
*viṣṇaviśeṣācyutāmbāguhagaṇapatiśāstrākhyayākhyātamūrti-
nnatvātmānaṃ parantaṃ śrutīrasigataṃ saccidānantarūpam /
śrīmannārāyaṇākhyadvijavaraviduṣaikatratra tantram samucci-
tyābaddham vyākariṣyāmyahamihā viduṣāṃ bhāṣayā toṣaṇāya //
vandiccū vāraṇamukhaṃ viravoṭu vāṇīm
kundaprabhāṃ bhagavatīm guruṇāthaneyum /
cemme samuccayamatinniha bhāṣayāyi
nirmippatinnu vivṛtiṃ tuniunnaho ṇān //*

147 Published Thanthra Vidya Peedhom, Aluva, Jayabharat Publications, Kozhikkode, 1st Edition. 1972.

148 Though it was the real intention, the teachers of the institution have never considered it as an authentic text and never known to have recommended as a reliable text.

- ¹⁴⁹ Published by Samrat Publishers, Trissur, 2009. Though there are numerous typographical errors it is the first attempt to bring into print.
- ¹⁵⁰ See the pp. 98, 107, 122, 123, 154, 175, 183.
- ¹⁵¹ See pp. 57, 80, 98, 101, 107, 122, 123, 154.
- ¹⁵² See pp. 40, 42, 57, 123, 183, 244.
- ¹⁵³ See pp. 107, 122.
- ¹⁵⁴ See p. 98.
- ¹⁵⁵ It is compiled by Karanam Sreedharan Nampoothiri.
- ¹⁵⁶ Dr. T. Ganapati Sastri who edited the work for first time draws attention to the fact that the author's name is given as *Īśānasivagurudevamiśra* in the colophon he has edited. It is given at the end of the *paṭala* as '*iti śrīmadĪśānasivagurudevamiśraviracite tantrasārapaddhatau vastunirddeś-amātr̥kotpattinirṇayo nāma prathamah paṭalaḥ*.' He also suspects the author might be a native of Mithila or adjoining regions. He further argues by mere presence of Manuscripts in Kerala it cannot be concluded that the author was a Keralite.

Ullūr postulates about another possibility that the author's real name might be *Īśāna* and '*Śivaguru*' may be conferred to him as an acknowledgment for his proficiency in *Śaivāgama*-s. See N.P. Unni, *op cit.*, for more on the identity of *Īśānasivagurudeva*.

- ¹⁵⁷ Though Vaṭakkuṅkūr and others prefer to assign eleventh century A.D. as more probable date of composition of the *ĪśGP*, Sarma's viewpoint sounds more reasonable and convincing. He argues 'Some historians of Sanskrit literature in Kerala date the *Īśānasivagurudevapaddhati* to the eleventh century A.D. But if we consider the works cited by *Īśānasivagurudevapaddhati*, especially *Somaśambhupaddhati*, we may not be able to date it earlier than the 12th century A.D. Even the *Mayamata*, which has been quoted several times, has been dated to 12th century A.D. Another Śaiva text, the *Bṛhatkātottara*, which has been quoted in the *Īśānasivagurudevapaddhati* has not been quoted by authors such as *Jñānaśambhu* and the disciples of *Aghoraśiva* who belong to 12th century A.D. Apart from this, there are no manuscripts of this text that date earlier than 12th century A.D. If we take the above mentioned points into

consideration, it is rather difficult to place this earlier than the 12th century A.D.' *The Eclectic Paddhatis of Kerala*, pp. 327-28.

158 V.V Dvivedi, *Ācāryaśaṅkarīyaḥ Prapañcasāraḥ*, pp. 189-91. The works he quoted are *Ajitam*, *Atharvavedaḥ*, *Uttaragārgyam*, *Kalpāḥ*, *Kāmikādi* (28 *āgamāḥ*), *Kāraṇākhyam*, *Kālottaram*, *Kalottaraṭīkā*, *Kiraṇāgamāḥ*, *Kūrmapurāṇam*, *Kṣetrapālatantram*, *Gaṇeśatantram*, *Guhyoktam*, *Gautamīyam*, *Candrajñānam*, *Tatvaparakāśaḥ*, *Tatvasāgarāḥ*, *Datvasiddhiḥ*, *Devotbhavākhyā* (tantram), *Devyāmatam*, *Daurgātantram*, *Nāradīyam*, *Nārāyaṇīyam*, *Padmotbhavasamhitā*, *Parākhyā* (samhitā), *Pārameśvaram*, *Pāśupatatantram*, *Piṅgalāmatam*, *Purāṇam*, *Pauṣkaram*, *Pratiṣṭhāpaddhatiḥ*, *Pratiṣṭhāsamuccayaḥ*, *Pradīpakalpāḥ*, *Prapañcasāraḥ*, *Prayogamañjarī*, *Bimbatantram*, *Brhatkālottaram*, *Brhattantram*, *Brahmapurāṇam*, *Bhānutantram*, *Bhūtanāthatantram*, *Bhojarājendrapaddhatiḥ*, *Makuṭāgamāḥ*, *Makuṭottaram*, *Mañjarī*, *Mataṅatantram*, *Mantravyākaraṇam*, *Mayasūtram*, *Mātrtantram*, *Māhentram*, *Mūlāgamāḥ*, *Mohaśūrottaram*, *Yogaśāstram*, *Yogaśivapaddhatiḥ*, *Yogānuśāsanam*, *Ratnatrayam*, *Lambitam*, *Lalitāgamāḥ*, *Lākuṭam*, *Vāgīśvarītantram*, *Vātulāgamāḥ*, *Vātulottaram*, *Vijayam*, *Viṣatantram*, *Viṣṇupurāṇam*, *Vīrāgamāḥ*, *Vaiśeṣikasūtram*, *Śivatantrapaddhatiḥ*, *Śivadharmāḥ*, *Śrutiḥ*, *Ṣaṭtriṃśattatvasiddhiḥ*, *Ṣaḍāsyatantram*, *Śaṅgrahaḥ*, *Sarvajñānasamudraḥ*, *Sarvajñānottaram*, *Samhitā*, *Samhitāṭīkā*, *Santānikam*, *Sārdhatrisatikā*, *Sūtram*, *Sūryatantram*, *Somatantram*, *Skandapurāṇam*, *Smṛtiḥ*, *Svacchandabhairavatantram*, *Svatantram* and *Svāyambhuvam*.

159 He quotes the following verses as the evidence.

saṅgītanṛttavāditraiḥ śaṅkhakāhaḥ lagomukhaiḥ
tīmilānakabheryādyairninadadbhiranārataṃ / (III. 50.343)
teṣvādaḥ matamāśritya khaḍgarāvaṇacoditam
nārāyaṇīyoditam ca mārgadvayamihocyate //

160 *Nigamāgamīyaṃ Darśanam*, p. 188.

161 *Buddhist Deities and Mantras in the Hindu Tantras: 1 The Tantrasārasamgraha and the Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati*, Indo-Iranian Journal, 42: p. 305, 1999.

162 *Problems of Name and Lineage: Relationships between South Indian Authors of the Śaivasiddhānta*, p. 207.

- 163 *Nigamāgamīyaṃ Darśanaṃ*, p. 189.
- 164 *brahmārka vaiśravaṇa kṛṣṇa sarasvatī*
śrīgauryagrajā dadatu kālyapi mātaro me /
kṣetrādhipo'tha rurujiṭ giriśādi rūpāṇī-
ndradayopi namate'bhimatam prasannāḥ // I.1.
- 165 It has come in print ed. By Narayanan Pillai of Dr. P. K Narayanapillai, TSS No. 166, University Manuscript Librabry, TVM, 1951. It is now available for free download in the website www. Shripuram.org with text and commentary in devanāgarī script.
- 166 II. 112.
- 167 II. 169.
- 168 III.15.
- 169 II. 52,III. 73.
- 170 VII.1,2.
- 171 III.37.
- 172 VII. 62, 67.
- 173 see the commentary on the verse I.3 '*asya granthasya tantrasamuccaya*
śeṣatvena śeṣasamuccaytvaṃ pratipādayati- yogyamiti / yat tantrasāragrahāt
yeṣāṃ tantrapradipādakānāmāgamānām sāraṃ grhītvā / gurukṛtaḥ asmad
gurubhir viracito yaṃ yastantrasamuccayaḥ/ tacchiṣṭāgamasārasaṃgrahatayā
tebhya stantrasamuccayamūlabhūtebhya āgamebhyo avaśiṣṭebhya
āgamebhyaḥ sārasaṅgrahatvena ārabhyamāne iha śeṣasamuccaye tataḥ
tasmādeva tantrasamuccayāt sukuśalaiḥ sādhakairakhilaṃ sāmānyakarma
grāhyaṃ syāt / atra punaḥ ajādyeṣu brahmādiṣu yo viśeṣa eṣa nikhilaḥ
svyaktaṃ sutarāṃ spaṣṭaṃ yathā bhavti tathā asmābhirucyate /'
- 174 There are two transcripts in IFP. *Tantraśeṣasamuccayānuṣṭhānam* T.No.807 and *Brahmādyanuṣṭhānam* T.No. 920 in devanagari script. The manuscript T.No. 807 has got only 175 pages and it is incomplete. The same is available (incomplete) in the manuscript collections of Vatakke Puliyannur Mana, which is kept in Vadakkumnatha Temple, Trissur.
- 175 The *Prapañcasāra* is attributed to the great *advaita* philosopher Śaṅkarācārya. There are controversies regarding its authorship and provenance. However, its influence on Kerala ritual practices is deep and pervasive, although it does not deal with consecration and installation rituals.

¹⁷⁶ It is attributed to Nārāyaṇācārya who is identified with Nārāṇattubhrāntan. This is just a postulation but internal evidences show that it is not a typical Kerala tantric ritual manual. But it is found quoted by the *Vivaraṇakāra*; for example see *Vivaraṇa* commentary on verse 62 on the third chapter. It runs as following; *pūrveṇa taṃ hutavahamiti / taduktaṃ- 'sthaṇḍilasya bhr̥śasthāne kalpīte sthaṇḍiladvaye' iti / cf. Bahudaivatya, IFP. T.No. 1004, p.4.*

*sthaṇḍilasya bhr̥śasthāne kalpīte sthaṇḍiladvaye /
vr̥hi taṇḍula sampūrṇe śamī dūrvā kuśāstr̥te //* and in *KS* see IFP. T.No. P.143.

*aśvathaiḥ khādiraiḥ plakṣhaiḥ pālāśaiḥ pāṭalairvaṭaiḥ /
nārāyaṇena sūktena śrīśūktena tathaiva ca //*
*ato deve trisūkte ca nāsadaum homucā tathā /
samsadidbhadrabhāvena tathā 'rayītyanena ca //*
gāyatrī pañcabhiścātra hotavyam vidhinaiva tu / cf. Bahudaivatya IFP T.No. 1004, p. 13,

*aśvathaiḥ khādiraiḥ plakṣhaiḥ pālāśaiḥ pāṭalairvaṭaiḥ /
nārāyaṇena sūktena śrīśūktena tathaiva ca //*
*ato devetisūktena nāsādaum homṛcā tathā /
samsadidbhadrapādena tvantarā ityanena ca //*
gāyatrī copaniṣadbhiṣca mantraiḥ pañcabhireva ca /

¹⁷⁷ This is another work considered to be written by a Keralite author. It is seen referred to in *ĪśGP* and *KS*; IFP. T.No.78, p. 248,

*ghṛtaṃ sviṣṭkṛtādīni kṛtvā śeṣaṃ samāpayet /
devotbhavodito devyāḥ śāntihomaḥ prakīrtitaḥ //*

¹⁷⁸ It is believed to be authored by Līlāśuka. See N.P.Unni, pp.217-18 for details.

¹⁷⁹ It is authored by a Vāsudeva who before starting the work pays tribute to his preceptors of his lineage. It is as following;

*śrīguruṇām śivādyānām praṇaumi caraṇāvalim /
yat prasādādidam viśvamaviśvāsyabhavanmama //*
*kṛṣṇalīlāśuka śrīmaccaraṇāmbhoja nissṛtim /
yatīndra madhupa vr̥ta veṣṭitām dhūlimāśraye //*
*bhavatrātaguroḥ pādanakhacandrān praṇaumyaham /
yeṣāṃ prasādataḥ kārṣṇī jyotsnā bhuvi virājate //*
namaḥ śrīrāghavānandasūripādāya nityaśaḥ /

bhaktānāmāśayadhvānta sambhedana paṭīyase //
tasyai śrīmādhaviyāṅghri nakharatna tviṣe namaḥ /
yā darśati bhaktānāmanta kārṣṇā tanum sadā //
śrīmatcchaṅkara pādābja yugalothān rajaḥkaṇān /
bhaktāntaratamaḥ pañkaśoṣaṇān praṇamāmyaham //
śrīmannārāyaṇācārya pādapañkeruhothitān /
vahāmi śīrasā pāmsūnajñānoccāṭanaṣadhān //
śrīmadrahasyagopālamantracintāmaṇervidhiḥ /
kathyate vāsudevena sampradāyakramāgataḥ //

180 It is another work attributed to Tozānūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri in which
expiation rituals of seven deities are explained in detail. See IFP. T.No. 802.

181 This is attributed to Svarṇagrāma Vāsudeva which contains more than fifty
eight verses describing *cakrahoma* ritual. The works believed to have written
by him include *Samviddarśananirṇaya* and three commentaries namely
Sarvāṅgasundarī on *Prayogasāra*, *Mantravimarśinī* on *Tantrasārasaṅgraha*
and *Vyāptivimarśinī* on *Śrīrahasya*. See N.P Unni, pp.301-2.

182 This work is a collection of manuscripts of several works authored or
compiled by a Kubera. These subjects/texts dealt with in text include
Jyeṣṭhātānta, *Nāgabalikalpa*, *Tṛṇāṅgabhaṇidhi* (?) *Śaktidaṇḍabali*, *Sarpabali*,
Kuberakalpam and *Śrīkṛṣṇatantram*. See N.P.Unni, p.324.

183 This is another work attributed to Kuzikkāṭṭu Bhaṭṭatiri (16th century A.D.).
ibid., p. 326.

184 Another work of Kuzikkāṭṭu Bhaṭṭatiri dealing with the rituals to be
performed while the renovation of a temple theatre. *ibid.*, 327.

185 This is attributed to a Subrahmaṇya, which deals with worship pentad of
deities namely Viṣṇu, Śiva, Skanda, Durgā and Sāstrī in fifteen *paṭala*-s.

praṇipatya hariṃ śambhuṃ guruṃ durgāṃ prabhāpatim /
sādhakāna hitārthāya tantrasāram vadāmyaham //
vaiṣṇavam pañcabhīrvakṣye caturbhiśśaivameva tu /
paṭalaistu tribhiḥ skāndam dvābhyāṃ daurgam tathaiva ca //
ekena śāstryāgam tu tantrasāraḥ samāsataḥ /
*paṭalaiḥ pañcadaśabhiḥ kriyatenukramādayam //.**ibid.*, p. 337.

186 Its authorship is attributed to a Śaṅkara. see N.P.Unni. *op. cit.*, pp.338-39 for
more details.

¹⁸⁷ It is believed to have written by a Govinda. see N.P Unni., pp.322-23.

¹⁸⁸ It is another ritual manual written in Malayalam, authored by Kakkad Narayanan Nambootiri. Principally it deals with the worship of number deities who are presented along with their retinues (*sapativāraṇ*). The deities include those who are not dealt with in the major ritual manuals of Kerala like *TS* and *ŚS*. And at the same time the rituals of different forms of seven brahmanical gods also find place in the text, for example; the worship of different manifestations of *Viṣṇu* namely *Rāmabhadra*, *Sītāpati*, *Varāha*, *Bhūvarāha*, *Varāhamūrti*, *Dharaṇī*, *Narasimha*, *Lakṣmīnarasimha*, *Daśāvatāranarasimha*, *Sudarśana*, *Mahāsudarśana*, *Paraśurāma* and *Śrīkṛṣṇa*. Just like the *KP*, it serves as a useful handbook for practicing priests of Kerala to have an easy reference to ritual specifications of a wide range of deities.



Chapter Six

THE DISAPPEARING AND EXPANDING RITUALS

This chapter focuses on major defining characteristics of ritualistic tradition of Kerala brahmanical *tantra*. It is in essence an off-shoot of the pan-Indian Āgamic and *Pāñcarātra* traditions. Then the question arises whether there is a unique tradition of *tantra* in Kerala? Yes there is. Even a casual observer can see the differences in ritual performances of Kerala brahmins and those of other neighboring South Indian states. If the sources of rituals are one and same how we will account for the differences? The differences can be generally attributed to the influence of regional socio-cultural factors. This chapter is devoted to look into some of the distinct ritual procedures of Kerala. But attempt is not made here to contextualize it in a socio-cultural history of Kerala. And to make matter more complex, a ritual in its core contains fundamental tenets of vedic, tantric, smārta and purāṇic elements that are interwoven inextricably. Therefore, locating Kerala *tantra* within a broader philosophical context will be certainly rewarding but equally challenging as well. This study primarily focuses on explaining the unique characteristics of certain Kerala tantric rituals in comparison with that of Āgamic and *Pāñcarātra* traditions. There are many gross and subtle elements that contribute towards making Kerala *tantra* a unique phenomenon. But it is impossible to enumerate all the elements from within the limit of the present work.

That all these attempts to look at a tradition from outside to inside and interpret as well as interlink the data thus found in the light of modern cultural & historical studies, do not shed enough light on the inner mechanisms of a ritualistic tradition. In what follows an attempt is made to bring to light the governing principles and peculiar customs and practices of Kerala *tantra*. In a way, this can be said as an effort to look at a tradition from within.

The present chapter mainly focuses on two aspects of ritual practices that are hitherto less noticed and not given much attention by scholars. They are the 1. *dīkṣā* (initiation) and 2. *jīrṇoddhāra* (renovation) rituals. The importance of initiation lies in the fact that it is a necessary precondition to undertake priestly rites and to study and interpret scriptures as well. But remarkably this qualifying ritual ceremony as such is no longer in vogue in Kerala. So from scriptural point of view disappearance of a qualifying ritual suggests the extinction of a tradition in its specific sense. It also raises the question as to whether Kerala tantric tradition is a living tradition or not. This is a very complex issue and the answer depends on how a tradition is defined. Regarding importance of the renovation rituals, it is the most elaborated, time consuming and

complex ritual performed within a temple complex. Almost all the ritual performances conducted in temple form part of renovation rituals.

There is also another reason to choose the renovation rituals for analysis. It is more or less associated with the cultural history of Kerala. Historically, the later medieval period witnessed the proliferation of temples and the emergence of wide range of ritual manuals in Kerala, as is the case in any other region of India. It can be inferred from the account of historians of Kerala that by the end of medieval period the scenario changed considerably. Comparatively the number of new temples that built at this juncture is very less. On the other hand, temples that already exist were modified or reconstructed as these were on the verge of dilapidation. Remarkably, the texts of late medieval period are seemingly concerned with renovation rituals other than construction of new temples.

So, the study of these two fundamental rituals will throw considerable light on the general characteristics of Kerala tantric rituals and to some extent their philosophical underpinnings.

I. *Dīkṣā* (The Initiation)

The initiation is held to be very important in both vedic and tantric traditions. The *Upanayana* in vedic tradition is a kind of initiation by which a novice gets entry into new world of customs and practices and

made eligible to observe the vedic rites. As far as tantric traditions are concerned the nature and purpose of initiation are quite different from that of vedic tradition. This is explained in some detail in the second chapter. From within this broad context, in this chapter an attempt is made to see how the Kerala ritual manuals treat the initiation. Here the texts are taken as testimonies that reflect traditional wisdom and existing cultural milieu. And as mentioned earlier, the initiation is nearly extinct in all Kerala tantric traditions. Therefore it has become a thing of the past and the textual evidences suggest that it has been held important by followers of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions in the past.

The space given in texts to discuss the rituals of initiation is not equal; for most of ritual manuals present the rituals of initiation in short terms. There are two possibilities. The first is that, the rituals of initiation might have been kept as a secret by followers of a tradition. Therefore it is not necessary to provide complete details of rituals of initiation in a particular text or texts. The other is that rituals of initiation are deliberately excluded from texts. By so doing the lines that demarcate the different cults within tantrism are erased and its cult-specific ideologies and practices are made subordinate to vedic practices and ideologies. By gradually removing the rituals of initiation from texts and practice the

orthodoxy sought to reassure the importance of brahmanical values and practices in the religious life of tantric priests. All the more important is according to general rule, once initiated into a particular sect one has to stick to the worship of pantheons sanctioned by the tradition. This will not allow an initiate to worship the god or gods who fall outside the purview of a tradition. So the best way to break this rule is to lay more emphasis on brahmanical values and practices. And the most important event in an orthodox brahmin's life is to get initiated into vedic cult through the investiture ceremony (*upanayana*). This right giving ceremony enables him to perform complex vedic and tantric rituals alike.

The Rituals of Initiation

The question of necessity of initiation arises in the context of a discussion on the necessary qualification of an officiating priest. The scriptures speak of several traits of an ideal *ācārya* / *tantrin* at length.¹ But an individual with these qualities is hardly met in the present era. Similarly, it is doubtful whether these qualities were ever possessed by officiating priests of gone years. Among the qualities prescribed, initiation is considered to be very important because it is the only qualifying ritual by which one gets entry into a tradition. All the other qualities can be acquired gradually in life by individual effort but not initiation. In Kerala

tantric traditions the initiation can be seen losing its real significance, particularly from later medieval period onwards. Textual accounts reflect the fact that rituals of initiation are appropriated and minimized to the rituals of *mantropadeśa*. But this shortest version of initiation is also lost its significance as it is not observed by hereditary priests across Kerala nowadays. The general rule followed today is that someone who is born to a family of hereditary *tantrin*-s gets automatically qualified to perform the priestly duties. This conventionally accepted practice apparently contrasts with the central ideologies of tantric traditions.

Another noteworthy point is that in other parts of India, Śaiva-s predominantly performs the rituals and consecration of Śiva only. They also perform the similar rituals of some other deities who are considered to be below in grade namely, Gaṇapati, Skanda, Viṣṇu, Gaurī etc. Similarly, Vaiṣṇava-s do that of Viṣṇu alone. Whereas, in the case of Kerala brahmin priests who do both without discretion. That means there is something common within the traditional repertoire, which qualifies a hereditary brahmin priest to perform all the rituals of cultic deities with equal importance. Here the demarking line of traditions totally disappears and all diverging cults held are of equal status. This may sound liberal, but from viewpoint of tantrism, it does not sound wise and agreeable.

This general perception of a tradition can be seen well reflecting on the tantric rituals also. In the present day scenario, the rites of initiation are modified to the extent that retaining the *mantropadeśa* alone- which is just a culmination point of initiation rites- the preceding important rituals are completely left out. It becomes far clearer that at some stages of evolution of Kerala *tantra* initiation seems to have gradually lost its real importance and this reality reflects in the texts written at this transitional stage. Certainly many factors could have influenced and played vital roles for this shift in focus to happen. Though generally it can be attributed to changing values and perceptions of brahmanical orthodoxy, the real social or cultural agent of transformation that led to this dramatic change, is not clearly identified yet. Broadly, it can be stated that the *bhakti* movement as well as resurrection and re-strengthening of orthodox brahmanical ideologies were the two principal influential forces that led to re-interpretation of the core ideologies of tantric cults.

The degradation of values that badly affected the morale of priestly class of brahmins (i.e., *tantrin-s*) may be also linked with a forgotten initiation. The forgetfulness and disappearance of an important element (i.e., initiation) from within a tradition largely accounts for lack of humane perspective, which the priestly class are notorious for. This

explicitly alludes to caste discrimination and other such ideologies that consciously or unconsciously encourage someone to distance oneself from others.

The Texts on Initiation

To recapitulate, the Kerala tantric ritual manuals are categorized into five groups in the fifth chapter (see Figure: V. 1) depending on the number of deities who prominently figure in those texts. But here the order of texts is slightly changed in accordance with the relative chronology of known texts, because, it is necessary to have an idea of historical evolution of a particular religious practice. It is applicable in the case of study of initiation also.

The first part of this chapter is devoted to see how the pre & post-*TS* ritual manuals of Kerala looked over the necessity and importance of the initiation.

Prayogamañjarī

As mentioned earlier, *PM*'s direct link with the *Siddhāntāgama*-s is obvious. It reflects the *Saiddhāntika* views with regard to philosophical postulations and rituals. While recounting the basic qualifications of a *ācārya*, the *PM* does not explicitly state the necessity of being initiated.

The verse which lays down the necessary qualifications of a *ācārya* runs as follow;

*āryāvartasamudbhavo vinayavān vāgmī kulīno yuvā
medhāvī kuśalaḥ kriyāsu viṣayeṣvandhaḥ śucirdhārmikaḥ /
pratyutpannamatiḥ śivāgamarato dakṣastapasvī satām
mānyo devagurudvijāgniṣu paraṁ bhaktob havetsādhakaḥ //*

I. 12. //

Here the word *sādhaka* calls for special consideration. It can be taken to mean in this context as one who has received the *sādhakadīkṣā*.

But the initiation proper is described in the ninth chapter, where it is explained in connection with installation ritual. The author links the rituals of initiation with *pratiṣṭhā*² and states that initiation is the necessary qualification to do *pratiṣṭhā*.

*bhaktastapasvī dhanavān praśāntaḥ
siddhāntadīkṣākṣapitāghaśuddhaḥ /
kartum pratiṣṭhāmucitastatoham
dīkṣāṁ pravakṣye prathamam samāsāt // IX.8. //*

This is really important because it is one who has undergone initiation alone can initiate others. The point worth noting is that the rituals of installation are a slight different version of rituals of initiation. In other words, to install a deity means to initiate him/her and thereafter the deity

is considered to be a disciple. In short, the core of installation rituals mirrors the rituals of initiation.

Two Kinds of Initiations

The *PM* deals with two kinds of initiations namely, *Mumukṣudīkṣā*- that which leads to liberation and *Adhikāradīkṣā*- that qualifies someone to perform consecration rituals in particular and rituals in general. The ritual specifications of both kinds of initiations are given in brief, for a detailed explanation of these procedures someone has to turn back to *Āgama*-s. Of the two, the first one is for personal benefit, whereas the second one has got a social dimension. It is interesting to note that *PM* as a ritual manual that focuses mainly on temple rituals deals also with an initiation that grants liberation.

Who is Eligible for Initiation?

Notably, the *PM* does not specify who is eligible for *dīkṣā* among the members of four castes. But it can be inferred that since it follows the lead of Siddhānta *Āgama*-s and addresses brahmin priests, it is reserved for them alone. Moreover, unlike *tantra*-s of great tradition, it favors a patriarchal line of transmission viz., from father to his son when it specifies to whom the traditional wisdom is to be imparted.

idaṃ rahasyamākhyātāṃ yajanaṃ sarvakāmikam /

bhuktimuktipradaṃ divyaṃ nāputrāya nivedayet // XVI.90. //

dīkṣitāya svaputrāya śiṣyāya vijitātmane /

priyāya śarvabhaktāya svāntakāle nivedayet // XVI.91. //

The point worth noting is that time and again the *PM* emphasizes on the fact that those who assist the guru in rituals must be either disciples of *ācārya* who conducts the ritual or an initiate in general. But the scenario is totally different now. The priority is given to *ācārya*'s choice and the question of whether someone is initiated or not does not arise at all.

Śaivāgamanibandhana

The initiation is the major theme of the seventh and eighth chapters of the *ŚN*. According to it, the initiation makes one free from all sins and also bestows priestly rights. The ritual procedures and philosophical interpretation of initiation are given more or less similar to those of the *PM*. The *ŚN* also speaks of two types of initiations. They are *Kriyādīkṣā* (bestows priesthood) and *Nirvāṇadīkṣā* (bestows liberation).³ This is similar to *Adhikāradīkṣā* and *Mumukṣudīkṣā* of the *PM*. But the *ŚN* specifies that any person irrespective of cast, creed and sex is eligible to

receive *dīkṣā*.⁴ It is really surprising to note that even eunuchs are considered to be eligible.

The other distinct features found in the description of initiation are:

a) Two more kinds of *dīkṣā*-s are added later on to this two-fold division namely *navatattvadīkṣā* and *pañcatattvadīkṣā*. The purpose of *navatattvadīkṣā* is also said to bestow priestly rights.⁵

b) It begins with the description of *samayadīkṣā* and subsequently the post-initiation rules of conducts of an initiate (*samayācāra*) are also given in brief. Though it frequently refers to *putraka* and *sādhaka* class of initiates, the procedures of initiation that distinguish them from each other are not specifically mentioned.

c) Usually initiation is received only once in one's lifetime. On the contrary, the *ŚN* prescribes that the initiation is to be given for twelve consecutive years and someone who received it in that fashion becomes equal to Lord Śiva.⁶

d) Slightly varying from the line of other Kerala *tantra* treatises the *ŚN* refers to *Liṅgadīkṣā*- a form of initiation by which the *Śivaliṅga* is initiated. In addition to it, procedures of *yajamānadīkṣā* (owner of the temple) also has seen given.

Īśānaśivagurudevapaddhati

The *paṭala*-s ranging from sixteen to nineteen of *Kriyāpāda* of *ĪśGP* exclusively deal with different kinds of initiation procedures. Before explaining the complex rituals of initiation in the sixteenth chapter, it places the whole procedures in a broader philosophical context of *Śaivasiddhānta*. The sixteenth chapter opens with pointing out the conditions under which *śaktipāta* can occur. The first is that, for a few, meditating the Śiva causes to nullify the powers of the inherent *mala*-s and this in turn leads to descent of power. However, the descent of power falls on him alone, whose demerits are transformed through the religious practices. In the case of such aspirants Śiva's direct interference leads to *śaktipāta*. In the case of majority of aspirants it can happen through a medium, *guru*. The *guru* must be pleased well by the deeds of aspirant for *śaktipāta* to fall.⁷

Those who are eligible to receive the grace of Śiva are referred to as *anugrāhya* in the *Saiddhāntika* lore. They are said to be of three kinds namely *Vijñānakala*, *Praḷayākala* and *Sakala*. The presence of number of *pāśa*-s viz., *mala*, *karma* and *māyā* distinguishes the three from each other. In the *Vijñānakala* only *mala* is present whereas in *Praḷayākala*, *mala* and *karma* are present. The *Sakala* is one who possesses all *pāśa*-s.⁸

The intensity of *śaktipāta* experienced by these three categories of individuals also varies. The *Vijñānakala* and *Praḷayākala* receive *tīvra* or *tīvratarasaktipāta* fall of grace whereas, the *Sakala* receives *manda* or *mandatara* or *tīvrasaktipāta*-s.⁹

The Categories of *Anugrāhya*-s and the Nature of *Śaktipāta*

<i>Anugrāhya</i>	<i>Pāśa-s</i>	Nature of <i>śaktipāta</i>
<i>Vijñānakala</i>	→ <i>mala</i>	} <i>Tīvra</i> , <i>Tīvratarā</i>
<i>Praḷayākala</i>	→ <i>mala, karma</i>	
<i>Sakala</i>	→ <i>mala, karma, māyā</i> →	<i>Manda, Mandatara, Tīvra</i>

(Figure: VI. 1)

Definition of *Dīkṣā*

According to the *ĪśGP* initiation is that which severs all the *pāśā*-s and leads to self-realization.

sā dīkṣā dīkṣayetyasmāddhātōḥ pāśakṣayoyataḥ /

dīkṣetikathyate jantoranugrāhyasya vai paśoḥ // 3 //

This is a common definition generally found in many of texts of *Śaivasiddhānta*, at times with slight variations. Traditionally, it is held that initiation directly works on *pāśa*-s and thus leads to final abode.

Interestingly, one the very influential *Pāñcarātra* treatises the *VS* also defines *dīkṣā* in a similar manner. According to it, initiation brings about all *siddhi*-s and causes to weaken the *grandhin*-s.

dīyante siddhayaḥ sarvāḥ kṣīyante granthayopyataḥ /

dīkṣātvamevaṃ dīkṣāyāḥ dharmādharmahṛdātmanaḥ // X.2. //

The Categories of Initiations

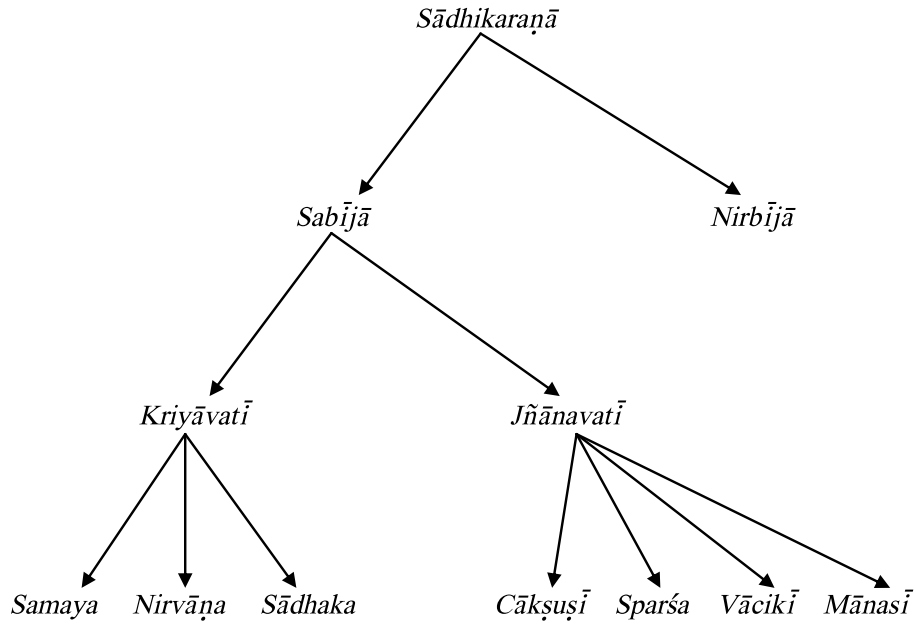
Among Kerala tantric texts it is only in the *ĪśGP* that one could see the initiation methods having divided into several sub-categories. The *ĪśGP*'s initiation methods are comparatively very complex since it integrates all elements of Āgamic initiation into its broad spectrum. The initiation is of two types namely, *niradhikaraṇā* (*nirādhārā*) and *sādhikaraṇā* (*sādhārā*).¹⁰ As the name indicates, in the *niradhikaraṇā* Śiva Himself initiates those who are worthy of receiving it. No external agency is said to be involved in this category of initiation other than Śiva himself. In the second form of initiation, Śiva gets it done through an intermediate (*guru*).

*dīkṣā ca niradhikaraṇā sādhikaraṇā ceti dviprakārā.yathāha
bhojarājāḥ :- ācāryanirapekṣeṇa bhagavatā svaśaktyānugraharū-
payā tīvratīvrata śaktipātena vijñānakalapralayākalānāṃ yā kri-
yate sā dīkṣā niradhikaraṇā. yatrācāryamūrtisthena bhagavatā man-*

*damandataratīvra śaktipātena kriyamāṇā sakalānām (sā) sādhi-
karaṇā (iti).*

The *sādhikaraṇā* is further divided into many sub-categories.¹¹ The complex pattern of classification can be depicted in the following way.

The Divisions of *Sādhikaraṇā dīkṣā*



(Figure: VI. 2)

As the diagram (Figure: VI. 2) suggests, the *sādhikaraṇā* is divided initially into two sub-categories namely, *sabījā* and *nirbījā*. The difference between these two *dīkṣā*-s is that the former is intended for intellectually advanced- i.e., *sādhaka* and *ācārya*:

sādhakācāryayor nityakriyā naimittikādiṣu

svaparārthādhikāritvāt sabījaiva vidhiyate // XVI. 12 // whereas,
the latter is mainly given to the king, girls, women, old people, sick and
those who are not serious about life.

sabījā samayopetā samayācārasamyutā /

pāśacchedādisamyuktā viduṣāmeva sā smṛtā // 10. //

nirbījā tu punardīkṣā rājñāṃ balavatāmapi /

ativṛddhātirugṇānāṃ bālīśānāṃ ca śasyate // 11. //

One may wonder why the initiation is given to these people who can not follow the traditional religious observances properly in their daily life. To know the reason behind it, we have to look into other *Saiddhāntika* sources. According to *Siddhāntaśekhara* and the eminent *Saiddhāntika* commentator Trilocanaśivācārya, the *nirbījadīkṣā* is of two types namely, *sadyonirvāṇadā* and *asadyonirvāṇadā* (*cirānnirvāṇadā* in *Siddhāntaśekhara*). As the name suggests, the former bestows the sudden enlightenment by rooting out the traces of *prārabdha*, *sañjita* and *āgamika karman*-s. It is given to those who are detached from worldly affairs like aged and patients. By receiving *asadyonirvāṇadā* initiation one gets free from the cycle of birth and rebirth gradually after consuming the *prārabdhakarman*. This is given to children and others.¹²

The *sabīja* is again classified into *kriyāvatī* and *jñānavatīdīkṣā*. As the name suggests, *kriyāvatī* is characterized by elaborate rituals, while the *jñānavatī* is transmitted solely by the means of guru's power of creative visualization.

yā maṇḍaparajaḥkuṇḍapāśacchedādhvaśodhanaiḥ // 13 //

dravyahomādisamyuktā dīkṣā soktā kriyāvatī /

vinā maṇḍapakūṇḍādyairmanovyāpāramātrataḥ // 14 //

samyagjñānāvabodhāntā dīkṣā jñānavatī smṛtā //

The *kriyāvatī* is again split into three more categories namely *samayadīkṣā*, *nirvāṇadīkṣā* and *sādhakadīkṣā*. In *samayadīkṣā* neophyte is initiated first with some purificatory rituals and then led to state of *Rudra*.

kriyāvatyapi samayadīkṣā nirvāṇadīkṣā sādhakadīkṣā ceti bahuvīdhā / yatra malaśodhanamātreṇa kriyayā samskr̥tya śiṣyaṃ samaye praveśya rudrātmataṃcāpātayet sā samayadīkṣā /

The ensuing rituals are explained in minute details in the last section of the same chapter.

The *nirvāṇadīkṣā* involves an elaborate ritual in which the initiate is purified at all levels of his existence. Detailed description of Śaiva cosmos consisting of 200 subcategories of worlds ranging from *kālāgni* to *śakti* and the presiding deities of respective worlds are given in the 17th

paṭala of *Kriyāpāda*.¹³ Being subjected to *nirvāṇadīkṣā* one never returns to the world of birth and rebirth.

As the name indicates the *sādhakadīkṣā* is for those who have succeeded in their tenure as a *putraka*.

The *jñānavatīdīkṣā* is further classified into four based on means of initiation. They are;

(1) *cākṣuṣī-* being the deity of the initiation himself, *ācārya* purifies the *addhvan*-s and cuts off the *pāśa*-s of *śiṣya* by a glance.

dhyāyan śivātmā samavekṣya
śiṣyaṃ tasminniyamyādhvagaṇam dṛśaiva /
cchitvā tu pāśāmsca śivatvamasmin
sampātayet yā khalu cākṣuṣī syāt // 25. //

(2) *sparśa-* visualizing as assuming the body of Rudra himself *ācārya* imagines the deity along with retinues being seated at lotus at his hand. Then he touches the *śiṣya* with this right hand which is supposed to release the disciple from confining *pāśā*-s.

rudraḥ svayaṃ mantratanuḥ svahaste padme samūrtyaṅga-
yute samūle /
smṛtvā śivaṃ yat sprśatīha tena sā sparśadīkṣā
cyuta pāśabandhā // 16.

(3) *vācīkī* - It is accomplished through the power of *vāc* namely, *mantra*-s. The disciple's *pāśa*-s are severed by the power of *mantra*-s.

*viśvāddhvasamyuktasadāśivātmā mantrān svavaktre
vinidhāya sarvān /
cchitvāsyā pāśān vacasakrameṇa samdīkṣyet yatra-
tu vācīkī syāt // 17.*

(4) *mānasī*.- In this method of initiation, the *ācārya* visualizing himself being consisting of all *addhvan*-s as well as all *mantra*-s at his heart, initiates the disciple.

*svayaṃ śivātmā nikhilādhvayuktaḥ svahr̥tsaroje
sakalaṃ samantram /
smaran śivaṃ mānasadīkṣayāmuṃ niyojaye-
jjñānavaśācchivatve // 18. //*

Some of the special features of the *ĪŚGP* are as following:

a) Apart from the description of the aforesaid varieties of initiation methods the *ĪŚGP* also refers to a particular form of initiation called *jātyuddhārādīkṣā*. By this initiation a non-brahmin is raised to the status of a brahmin (*dvijatva*). Here it seems the *dvijatva* is employed in its literary sense i.e., second birth, because it is certainly a second birth for a disciple. But not only he is a twice-born at ideological level but also marked with external insignias of a brahmin, like *yajñopavīta* etc. And he

is made rightful to *mantratantraśravaṇa* and *pūjā*-s that fall outside the brahmanical fold.¹⁴

The significance of such a promoting ritual lies in the fact that according to basic tenets of the *Paddhati* texts, only a twice-born is privileged to reap the fruits of salvation.¹⁵ Through the *jātyuddhāradīkṣā* the previous caste of the disciple is dissolved into his new identity. The interesting point is that even if it is possible for a low caste to attain brahminhood through the initiation, such a convert is not given privileges of a so-called brahmin.¹⁶

b) The description of initiation rituals culminates in the consecration of disciple into *ācārya* status (*ācāryadīkṣā*) followed by *sādhakadīkṣā*. Though the *PM* and *ŚN* lay down the ritual procedures of *samaya* and *nirvāṇadīkṣā*-s, they do not mention about the hierarchies of initiates and corresponding initiation methods that places them in a hierarchy. On the other hand the *ĪŚGP* provides every details of initiation in this regard. What is to be noted here is that even if the *ĪŚGP* incorporates the worship of other deities like Viṣṇu, Skanda etc. into its repertoire, the initiation methods explained are exclusively of *Śaivasiddhānta*.

Viṣṇusaṃhitā.

The initiation is the core of ninth and tenth chapters of the *VS*. While describing the necessary qualifications of a *ācārya*, the *VS* prescribes *dīkṣā* as the first and foremost of all qualities.¹⁷ The very purpose of initiation is stated in the beginning of the tenth chapter as to enable one to practice rituals¹⁸ and to set him on the path of liberation. But the liberation is reserved for *yogin*-s alone.¹⁹ So initiation grants two essential things in the religious life of a *Vaṣṇavite*. According to the *VS*, initiation bestows whatever an initiate needs in the very life and deteriorates the power of *granthin*-s that confine the soul to a limited being.²⁰

Some of the notable features are as following:

a) In both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions the initiates form a similar hierarchy. They are— (1) *samayin* (2) *putraka* (3) *sādhaka* and (4) *ācārya/deśika*. The *VS* explicitly refers to the ritual specifications that distinguish the four categories of initiates from each other. It is as following.

1. *samayin*- Those who have undergone this first level initiation are known as *samayin*. In the ritual of initiation of *samayin*-s

the novice is let to see the *maṇḍala* in which the retinues of Viṣṇu alone is worshipped.²¹

2. *putraka*- In the initiation of *putraka*-s the *maṇḍala*, in which the deity along with his retinues, is shown by the *ācārya* himself. The difference between the rituals of initiation is that in the former the retinues alone are worshipped, whereas in the latter the major deity along with his retinues is present in the *maṇḍala*.²²

3. *sādhaka*- In addition to the *maṇḍala* worship and *maṇḍaladarśana* the fire sacrifice also incorporated in the ritual of initiation of *sādhaka*.²³

4. *ācārya/ deśika*- All the above ritual constituents form, as a complete whole, the rituals of initiation of *ācārya*.²⁴

b) The *VS* speaks of two classes of initiates namely, *dīkṣita* and *abhiṣikta*. The differences between them are the former is expected to strictly follow the code of conduct of a *samayin* and must have a good working knowledge of the scriptural teachings. While the latter is privileged to initiate others into his tradition also.²⁵

c) After initiation, the initiate is known by different name i.e., mostly by one of various epithets of Viṣṇu, particularly within the circle of initiates. The suffixes attached at end of names indicate the caste of the

disciples. Usually *deva* stands for brahmins, *varma* for *kṣatriya*, *gupta* for *vaiśya*, *dāsa* for *śūdra* and *devi* for women.²⁶ The remarkable fact is that the individuals of four castes including women are eligible to receive initiation according to the VS.

d) It is through consecration ritual (*kalaśābhiṣeka*) an initiate becomes *ācārya*. Both the *putrka* and *deśika* can become *ācārya* by the consecration.²⁷ After the rituals of consecration the disciple is bestowed with the ritual accoutrements like *yogapaṭṭa*, *uṣṇīṣa*, *cakra* and *angulīyaka*, which tell his relative position and power among other initiates. It is not mentioned the specific contexts in which initiates have to use all these external religious insignias. But the *uṣṇīṣa* is referred to in the context of *bali* as it is said that the *ācārya* must wear *uttarīyaka* and *uṣṇīṣa* while doing the offerings. Among the initiates the *ācārya* occupies a distinct position as all the traditional secrets are revealed to him alone.²⁸

e) It is stated that the one who is initiated for twelve consecutive years is the Lord Viṣṇu himself. Similar concept is found in the ŚN also.²⁹ This is an interesting point to note because logically it is not necessary to initiate one every year through the same procedure. Once initiated the liberation is guaranteed to an aspirant depending on his perseverance and intensity in the post-initiatory religious practices. These two texts seem to be an exception and their source could not be traced yet.

f) The VS includes even the king, childless *sādhaka*-s, poor and sick in the list of eligible people for initiation.³⁰

Māṭṛsadbhāva

The initiation is the major theme of the sixth chapter of the *Mā. Sad.* The procedures are given in brief and they are relatively simple. It speaks of two kinds of initiations, namely *vedhadīkṣā* and *abhiṣeka*.³¹ Here the *abhiṣeka* is followed by *vedhadīkṣā*. The rituals of *abhiṣeka* are explained in detail. On the contrary, ritual procedures of *vedhadīkṣā* are not explicitly mentioned. But it can be inferred from the reference made to it by name.

The initiation method prescribed in the text is a *Saiddhāntika* model, but slight variations may be noted. It is stated that initiation can be performed not only to uplift an ardent follower spiritually but also for other reasons like rituals for peace and progression, performance of daily and obligatory rituals, the king's consecration and installation of images, renovating temples and imparting *mantra*.³² This is a remarkable point because the sole purpose of initiation here seems to be giving right to do some important rituals. It is not consistent with the real purpose of initiation as stated in the beginning. It is said that the initiation bestows the supreme knowledge and nullifies the impact of sins.

dīyate jñānasadbhāvaḥ kṣīyate pāpasañcayaḥ /
tena dīkṣeti nāmā'syāḥ kriyāyāssamudīritaḥ //

Here it appears that the salvific nature of initiation is totally forgotten or ignored and stress is laid on right-giving aspect. But it is to be remembered that ritual manuals of Kerala that deal with initiation always stress on this right-giving aspect of initiation although they define the *dīkṣā* in the similar manner Āgamic texts do.

Kriyāsāra

Even if the *KS* begins with rituals of Śiva, initiation neither appears in the first section nor in the next, dealing with the rituals of Viṣṇu. But it is given in the third section of the *KS*, which deals with the ritual specifications of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa. It is interesting to note that out of seven deities the initiation ritual procedures of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa alone is given in the text. There is a possibility that since it is the first known ritual manual to deal with the cult of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, it is natural to specify the details of rituals of initiation. The author may have presupposed that the reader will be familiar with the ritual cult of other deities.

The rituals of initiation are more or less similar to *Śaiva siddhānta*.³³ As the name of the deity suggests, the concepts and *mantra*-s

of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava cults could be found proportionally interwoven in the rituals of initiation also.

Putayūrbhāṣā

Unlike other texts of the genre, the *PB* directly begins with the description of the ritual procedures of *mantropadeśa*. Notably, it does not distinguish *dīkṣā* from *mantropadeśa*, but under the title *dīkṣā* it explains the procedures of *mantropadeśa*. For the author, it appears, both meant same. Following the line of early texts, the *PB* also asserts on the necessity of initiation as to perform installation rituals.³⁴ The initiation method is not a typical Āgamic one as is seen in the *PM*, *ŚN* and *ĪŚGP*, rather a shortest version of it containing many of important elements.³⁵ The *PB* does not specify into which cult the disciple has to be initiated, as to whether Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava or Śākta. The reason may be its focus is not on the rituals of a particular cult rather, like *KS*, it is diverted equally on the cult of seven prominent deities namely, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, Durgā, Śāstrī, Subrahmaṇya, and Gaṇapati. So, by the time of the *PB* the initiation is started to lose its cultic affiliation and revised to fit into a general structure. That means cult specific ritualism did not last long here particularly after thirteenth century A.D. and paved its way for ritual eclecticism.³⁶ The idea of "ritual eclecticism"³⁷ first put

forward by Phyllis Granoff in 2000 and according to her it connotes "the willingness of one religious group to allow to its members to practice rituals that it explicitly acknowledged belonged to another group."³⁸ The ritual eclecticism is characterized by integration of favorable elements of other cults into a specific ritual cult. There does not exist a demarcating line between any cults in the context of Kerala *tantra*, so element which fits well in the ritual context can be taken from other cults. The so-called Kerala tradition of tantrism is eclectic in nature since it is complex mixture of several interrelated concepts and practices and all the more importantly, it is found permissible in all instances.

What is to be noted here is that the initiation that is held to have a pivotal role in the religious life of a person loses its importance in the later texts altogether.

Tantrasamuccaya

All the ritual manuals discussed above in one way or another links the initiation with performance of consecration rituals. But this scenario takes an entirely different turn from *TS* onwards. Like the *PB*, it also does not differentiate *dīkṣā* from *mantropadeśa*. Therefore, one may get the impression that the technical term *dīkṣā* might have been used as a synonym of *mantradīkṣā* or *mantropadeśa* in the texts like *TS* and *PB*. If

the word *dīkṣā* is interpreted in this specific sense the problem of consistency will be solved. Otherwise the puzzle will remain unsolved that both at the outset emphasize on the necessity of *dīkṣā* to become *ācārya* and contrary to this statement, they explain of the rituals of *mantropadeśa* in detail. This contradiction will cause one, who is familiar with the *Saiddhāntika* or *Pāñcarātra* scriptures, to doubt that these texts are slightly inconsistent when they come to discuss the *dīkṣā* and *mantropadeśa*.

While specifying the qualities of a *ācārya* (or *tantrin*) in the fifth verse of the beginning chapter the author states that the *ācārya* must be an initiate.³⁹ But the initiation procedures are given towards the end of the text. While all the earlier texts give much importance to initiation and discuss it in the beginning chapters, the *TS* furnishes the details of *mantropadeśa* in the twelfth chapter. There the rituals of initiation are described in short in verses from 57 to 60. The core of rituals described in the four verses is as given below.

A *maṇḍapa* is erected for this purpose in the beginning and it is consecrated ritually by the *ācārya*. It is to be noted that while most of the early texts explicitly mentions the exact location where the *maṇḍapa* has to be built viz., in house of *guru* or temple etc., the *TS* does not mention

any location in particular. Then, after the preliminary process of fire worship is over, the deity of initiation is worshipped in a pot filled with *kvāthoda* and *pañcagavya*, which is placed in the center of a *maṇḍala* drawn at the center. Then the disciple is brought to the *maṇḍapa* and asked to drink the *pañcagavya* as a preliminary act of purification. Following this purificatory rite he is asked to sit right in front of the *guru*. It is then the ritual of initiation proper begins. The first ritual procedure is the purification of gross and subtle bodies of the disciple done by means of visualization. Then he is allowed to see the *maṇḍala* worshipped earlier and asked to make an offering to the deity by giving him handful of flowers. After this he is led to fire pit (*homakuṇḍa*) where he is seated on the right side of *guru*, while the latter makes offerings to the fire. After the fire offerings are over, the *guru* by performing the remaining rituals of metaphysical transformation consecrates (*abhiṣecana*) the disciple with the *kalaśa*. This specific *kalaśa* is the one which is worshipped earlier being placed at the *maṇḍala*. Then *mantropadeśa* is given and the rituals culminate in oral instruction of *samayācāra*, which is the code of conduct for an initiate.⁴⁰ Generally the texts enumerate the set of rules to be followed by disciples in great detail but the *TS* does not prescribe any of them explicitly.

It is important to note that the author of the *TS* and its two commentators do not state anywhere explicitly that this ritual is just only a precursor to *mantropadeśa*, rather they considered it as the ritual of initiation proper. Nonetheless, both held slightly different views on why one should receive *dīkṣā*. According to the *Vimarśinī* commentator Śaṅkara, the initiation is necessary in order to become a *ācārya*.⁴¹ Whereas, for *Vivaraṇa* commentator Kṛṣṇa, the initiation is essential to recite the *mantra*-s prescribed in the text and all the more important is the *mantra*-s should be heard in the context of rituals of initiation.⁴² This statement of the *Vivaraṇa* commentator as well as that of the *PB* are the substantial evidences that lead us to the conclusion that under the title *dīkṣā* or *mantropadeśa* these two texts explain *mantradīkṣā*, not the rituals of initiation proper.

The ritual procedure given in the *TS* is a general framework, which certainly contains many of elements of *Saiddhāntika* or *Pāñcarātra* initiation. While the *Saiddhāntika* rituals of initiation last at least for two days, the procedure outlined in the *TS* could be completed within hours. Moreover, as said above, it is presented as a general framework that can be applied not only for imparting the *mantra* of seven deities discussed in the *TS* but also of any deity.

Kriyāsaṅgraha

The ritual of initiation is the central theme of fifth chapter of the *K. Sa*. The beginning verse of the chapter makes it clear that it is to explain the *adhikāravatīdīkṣā*, which enables a person to undertake consecration rituals.⁴³ Notably, in another instance *dīkṣā* is linked with *pratiṣṭhā*.

The rituals of initiation are very much similar to that of *TS* but the difference is that as per the *K. Sa*'s account it will take two days to finish the full-fledged rites. The rituals of preliminary purification form the major part of first day performances. After fire offerings are over, which is followed by ritual purification of gross and subtle bodies, the *kalaśa* being filled with *kvāthoda* and *pañcagavya* is reserved for the next day by performance of *adhivāsahoma*. The previous day rituals end with this. In the next day morning he is consecrated with *kalaśa* (*kalaśābhiṣeka*) and once he replaces wet clothes with new ones, the *mantropadeśa* is given to him. Subsequently, the initiate has to recite the *mantra* hundred and eight time then and there. As it is seen earlier, the *mantropadeśa* is followed by the oral instruction of code of conduct of an initiate.

The post- initiation rules of conduct are very much elaborated in the text and it would be interesting to see a couple of them.

a) The initiate has to engage himself every day in reading and interpreting the scriptures belonging to the tradition and practice *yoga* and *dhāraṇā* as well. He is exempted from these if he is staying his *guru's* home.⁴⁴ These things are inevitable for an initiate for his intellectual conviction and spiritual progress. As culture of this nature is disappeared, we have lost a rich body of traditional wisdom and values along with them.

b) The other one is, on the contrary the pre-*TS* texts like *VS* and *PP*, it is said that the initiate (*vaiṣṇavaḥ*) is not supposed to respect people of low caste.⁴⁵ This statement is not surprising when one recognizes that it stands with brahmanical values and caste discriminations.

Kuzikkāṭṭupacca

As it is said earlier, the *KP* is a post-*TS* ritual manual, which represents the rituals laid down in the *TS* in vernacular language. But, other than following the line of presentation of the *TS* as such, the author is seen very often going beyond the source text by giving additional details, sometimes drawn from other texts or from his own practical experience. It is evident in the case of rituals of initiation too. It appears that sustaining the basic structure of the ritual as such the author modifies and elaborates some elements to make the ritual procedures wholesome.

It may be noted that in the *KP* also the term used for *dīkṣā* is *mantropadeśa* and its procedures are given at the end of the twelfth chapter. The glaring difference in the procedure is that the *kalaśa* is worshipped separately in another *maṇḍala*, not within the one drawn to worship the deity of initiation. At the end the author adds further the details of drawing a *maṇḍala* by alphabets in which the initiate is seated and *mantropadeśa* is given. The specific *maṇḍala* made up of alphabets prescribed in the *KP* is not found in the *TS* and other post-*TS* Kerala tantric literature as well.

Keralāīyakṣetratantrakriyāpaddhati

As has been mentioned earlier this is a recent work which opens with detailed description of rituals of *mantropadeśa* but under the title *dīkṣāvidhi*. What urged the scholars who worked behind the book to include *dīkṣāvidhi* is the realization that one becomes a *ācārya* only when he receives initiation and there is a collective amnesia about its religious significance particularly among the hereditary *tantrin*-s. Therefore it is necessary to bring back this key element into practice. However, there is no guarantee that the present day traditional *tantrin*-s will understand its significance and bring back it into practice when they impart the wisdom to new generation.

The ritual procedures of *mantropadeśa* given at the outset of *Keraḷīyakṣetratantrakriyāpaddhati* is an extended version of rituals given in the *TS*.

Summary

This textual analysis of initiation procedures shows the successive transformation of a ritual practice, which has been held very important in all tantric traditions alike. As a general rule, all practices that form part of an oral tradition may not be found registered in texts. On the contrary, a recent survey, conducted to study the existing as well as long forgotten practices among *tantrin*-s of Kerala, suggest that the initiation is itself on the verge of complete extinction. What remains still widely in practice is imparting *mantropadeśa*, that too exists only in some familial traditions.

While liberation is held to be one of the major objectives of undergoing initiation, it is not at all a matter of concern in the post-*TS* treatises. The focus can be found gradually shifting from attempting to strike a perfect balance between philosophy and ritual to mere description of ritual procedures. This reflects the changing values and perceptions of orthodoxy in its broader sense. However, the above discussion leads to the following conclusions.

1. The relatively earlier pre-*TS* texts belonged to a specific tantric cult and they tend to uphold the virtues of "ritual exclusiveness." The rituals prescribed in them were primarily "the ritual for others (*parārtha*)". The *ŚN* and *VS* are exceptions in this regard because they deal with *ātmārtha pūjā* also. It is from *KS* onwards the whole focus turns to temple worship alone.

2. Another important point that should not be left unnoticed is the disappearance or total transformation of cult-specific system of initiation. The transformation of a ritual system into a new form is a result of interplay of several factors. Here the tantric system of initiation transforms into *mantradīkṣā* and this shift points towards the emergence of *vaidika-tantrika* tradition of *tantra* in Kerala.

3. There are similarities between initiation and installation rituals. Among the initiates the *ācārya* alone is sanctioned to do installation rituals. But it is obvious that this general rule of tantrism is not followed by later medieval texts of Kerala *tantra*. Rather they present a revised and re-constructed initiation model that gives more prominence to vedic ideologies and praxis. It creates great trouble if the *ācārya*-s of Kerala are not understood in this way, because from the *Saiddhāntika* or *Pāñcarātra* view point most of the present day *tantrin*-s of Kerala will seem to be unqualified to perform tantric rituals.

II. *Jīrṇoddhāra*

The central themes of discussion so far have been construction of a new temple, installation rituals and rituals of initiation. Now the focus turns on renovation rituals. Here *jīrṇa* in its specific sense refers to any particular part of a temple which is decayed or dilapidated due to passage of time, natural calamities or some other reasons. The *uddhāra* can be roughly translated as "renovation" or "renewal" as these meanings fit well to the context. Almost all texts of the *Saiddhāntika* and *Pāñcarātra* traditions, particularly those which deal with the temple rituals have a section devoted to the rituals of *jīrṇoddhāra*. For these texts all the constructions in a temple form a part of single unified system and damage in any part of it is a matter of great concern. And the ritual of *jīrṇoddhāra* becomes more complex as damage gets complicated from the periphery *gopura* (the ornamented gateway of a temple) to center *bimba* (idol). And there is a text belonging to *Saiddhāntika* tradition called *Jīrṇoddhāra-daśaka*,⁴⁶ which exclusively devoted to explain the ritual nuances of *jīrṇoddhāra* alone. As the name suggests in ten verses it shortly explains the rituals that should be performed if any part of the temple building is seen damaged. Broadly it classifies the subject into three namely, *jīrṇoddhāra* of *ālaya* (sanctum sanctorum), *liṅga* and *bera*. These are

again classified into seven, eight and six sub-categories⁴⁷ that cover all the building constructions forming part of a temple.

*jīṛṇoddhārastridhāyaṃ prathamamabhihitastvālayādestathādyo-
liṅgādestu dvitīyastadanu śivatanor berakādestṛtīyaḥ /
tatrādye saptabhedāḥ punarathagaditā stadvitīyeṣṭasaṅkhyā
tāḥ paścāttu ṛtīye śivamatavacanaiḥ ṣaṭ prabhedāḥ krameṇa // 2 //*

However, the rituals of *jīṛṇoddhāra* are short and could not be understood with the commentary or knowledge of *Āgama*-s.

On the other hand, the ritual manuals of Kerala deal mainly with renovation of *bimba*, *pīṭha* and *prāsāda*.⁴⁸ All the *pratiṣṭhānta*-s discussed earlier deal with renovation rituals. The point worth noting is that the rituals turn to be more complex from *TS* onwards. In the early texts like *PM* and *ŚN*, the rituals of *jīṛṇoddhāra* are prescribed in a simple manner and it will only takes six or seven days to complete the rituals. But the *TS* provides most complex ritual methods of *jīṛṇoddhāra* and the rituals are extended to eleven days.

The texts, particularly the *TS* as well as post-*TS* ritual manuals deal with two kinds of rituals of *jīṛṇoddhāra*, they are *niṣkrāmaṇa* and *saṅkoca*. Of these the former (*niṣkrāmaṇa*) is advised in the instance of replacement of old *bimba* with new one and time-consuming reparatory

works of *prāsāda* (if it takes more than one month up to twelve years). On the other hand, the *saṅkoca* is done particularly in the case of minor construction works of *prāsāda*, which could be completed within a month for certain.⁴⁹ It is a visualization procedure by which all the divine beings or forces that inhabit the temple compound are diffused into the *bimba*.⁵⁰

Generally, the term *niṣkrāmaṇa* denotes a ritual procedure in which the *caitanya* of the deity is invoked into a *kalaśa* and it is taken out of *prāsāda*. It is said to be of two types namely, *bālālayādisahita* and *kalaśaikakārya*. This classification is based on the nature and intensity of destruction of sanctorum or other constituent structures.⁵¹ The *bālālaya* denotes a makeshift made of wood or metal which is specifically erected on the right side facing the sanctum sanctorum. The synonyms often found used in texts are *alpaprāsāda*, *alpageha* / *alpragrha*, *alpamandira* and *taruṇālaya*. The idol which is also made up of wood or metal and installed within it is termed as *alpabimba* or *bālabimba*.⁵² The texts that deal with *bālālayapraṭiṣṭhā* specify the exact measurement of *alpaprāsāda*, *alpabimba* and *maṇḍapa*.⁵³ After the construction and consecration of *alpaprāsāda* it is considered to be as important as the main sanctum sanctorum itself. Once the purpose of a *bālālaya* as well as *alpabimba* is served the temporary shelter has to be demolished and the

bimba should be disposed off. If the *bimba* is made of wood it has to be offered into fire. On the other hand, the *bimba* made of metal has either to be melted in fire and raw metal has to be offered to *ācārya* or can be retained as a *kautukabimba* for festival purpose.

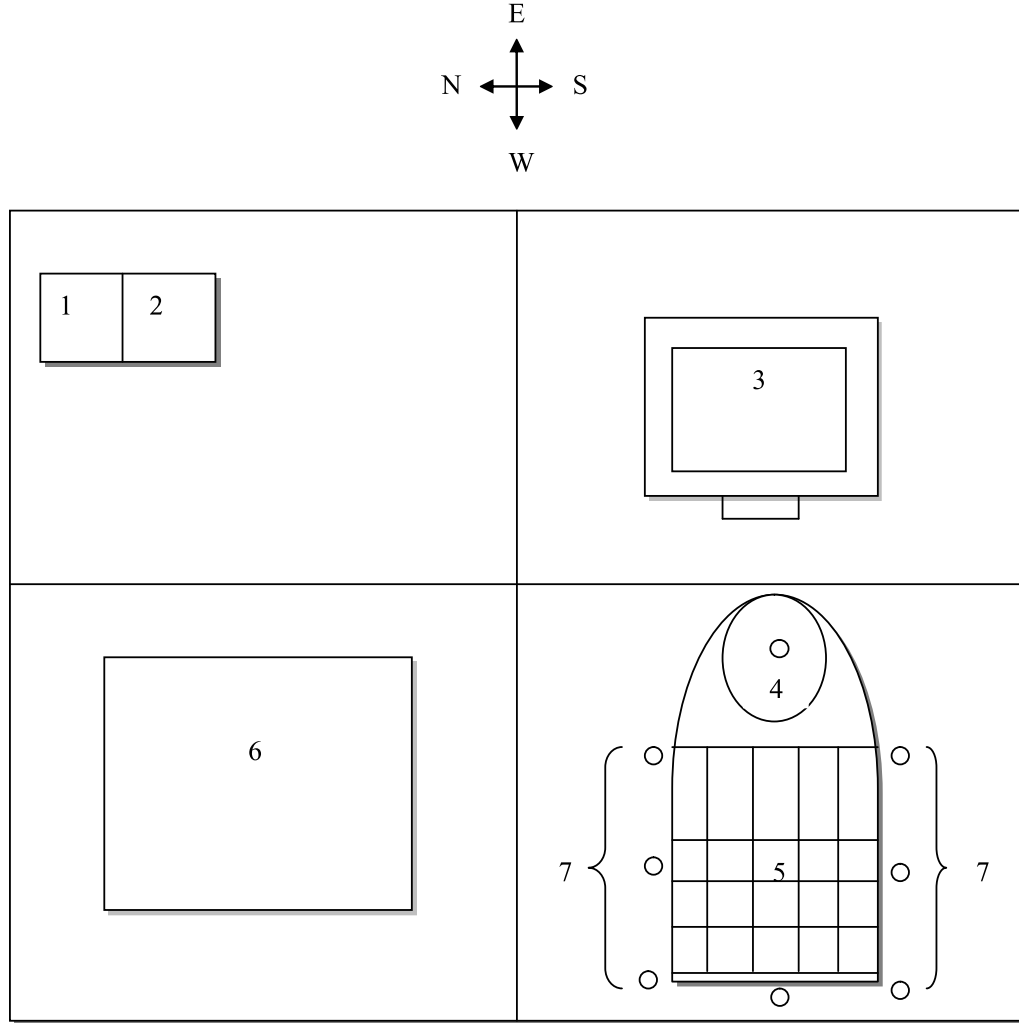
Between the *bālālayādisahita* and *kalaśaikakārya* types of *niṣkrāmaṇa* the former is suggested in the instances of 1) if the *bimba* is partially or fully broken and it is to be abandoned by all means and the sculpting new *bimba* will take more than one month up to twelve years 2) similarly, if the reparatory works of *prāsāda* will last for more than one month up to twelve years.

While in *kalaśaikakārya*, the rituals of replacing *bimba* are performed in a day without the procedures of *bālālayapratīṣṭhā*. In this instance also, the deity is invoked into *kalaśa* and taken out of sanctum sanctorum and made to rest in the ritual bed (*śayyā*) prepared in the *maṇḍapa*.

In what follows a brief description of the major ritual components of *jīrṇoddhāra* are given. This is a continuation of rituals of *jīrṇoddhāra* (from *prāyaścittahoma*-s, *bimbaparigraha* up to *anujñākalaśābhiṣeka*) explained in brief in the third chapter. Here the rituals from seventh day onwards are taken for brief analysis. The seventh day rituals are

performed in specifically erected *kalaśamaṇḍapa* and it is divided equally into four quarters. It will look like as given below.

The *Kalaśamaṇḍapa*



1. *kumbheśa* 2. *karkkarī* 3. *śirastattvakuṇḍa* 4. *nidrākalaśa* 5. *śayyā* 6. *maṇḍala* 7. *vidyeśvara-s*.

(Figure: VI. 4)

The seventh day rituals start with the worship of *kumbheśa* and *karkkarī* in which within the former the predominating deity of the temple is worshiped. Whereas, the *karkkarī* is worshipped with *astramantra* and once the first round rituals of both are over, both are taken around the *maṇḍapa* in the clock-wise direction by dropping (*pariṣeka*) the *karkkarī* water all the way around the *maṇḍapa*. By this the *maṇḍapa* is purified and all the ensuing rituals are performed only after the *karkkaripariṣeka*. Then the *nidrākalaśa* and *pratiṣṭhāhoma* are performed within the *kalaśa* and *homakuṇḍa* respectively. Almost at the same time the *śayyā* is made ready by worshipping it and placing the *aṣṭamaṅgala*-s, *upahārā*-s and the well-grown sprouts (*aṅkura*-s) around it at prescribed directions. Thereafter the both the *pratiṣṭhāhoma* and *śirastatvahoma* are performed in the *śirastatvakunḍa*. Parallel to these rituals, all of which are performed often by *parikarmin*-s, *ācārya* will perform one of the important rituals of the day viz., *saṃhāratatvahoma* in a specifically made and ritually consecrated fire altar at *mukhamaṇḍapa*.

As the name suggests it is a ritual act of *saṃhāra* in which all the lesser divine beings said to be inhabiting the temple complex are offered in fire by reciting their respective *mantra*-s. This follows a specific order in which the *mantra*-s beginning with *kṣetrapāla* up to *dvāsthā*-s

(*kṣetrapālādidvāsthāntam*)⁵⁴ are recited and offered into the fire in the first section. It goes on to continue without break to the next set of *mantra*-s, which consist of the recital and accompanying offering of *nirmālyadhārin* up to *guru* (*nirmālyadhāryādigurvantam*). Then the *samhāratattvakalāśa* worshipped adjacent to altar of *samhāratattvahoma* is taken to sanctum sanctorum and the *ācārya* asks permission to carry forward the rituals from the brahmins⁵⁵ and the spectators by reciting certain verses in Sanskrit.⁵⁶ Being permitted to go ahead, *ācārya* goes back to sanctum sanctorum and performs the most important part of *dhyānasaṅkoca* ritual. A powerful mental concentration of *ācārya* is necessary for doing this particular ritual. The visualization commences with *nāḍīśandhāna* in which *ācārya* visualizes the *nāḍī*-s namely *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā* of both of his and the deity are being interconnected.⁵⁷ Then he enters into deity's consciousness and becomes one with him. Once it is accomplished, he visualizes the whole temple complex is being situated horizontally within two lotuses. For the first lotus the *prāsāda* is *karṇikā* (pericarp) whereas for second it is the idol. Then the whole divine beings and metaphysical constituents making the temple a perfect divinely abode are dissolved into the idol and the deity is conceived as *cit* (*cinmātra*).⁵⁸

Subsequently, the *jīvakalaśa* is worshiped right in front of the deity and at a specific juncture the *jīva* of the deity is invoked from idol to *jīvakalaśa*. It is held conventionally that if the idol remains perfect and not intended to replace at all, then the *jīva* of the deity is said to pass through *bhrūmadhya* into *śaṅkha*. In the case of idol of broken limbs and needed to be replaced the *jīva* is said to pass through *mūrdhā* by breaking cranium at its apex. These conceptual variations reflect the commonly held belief that the *jīva* that passes through *mūrdhā* by breaking the cranium never returns to the material world. This kind of passage of spirit simulates natural death of accomplished *yogin*-s. After merging the *jīva* of the deity into *jīvakalaśa*, it is taken to *maṇḍapa* and laid rest in the mattress ritually prepared earlier for this purpose.

Then the *bimba* is rooted out (*bimbodhāra*) from the sanctum sanctorum by tying around a robe made up of tail of calf of which one end is tied to bull/ cow and the other to the idol. While doing this *ācārya* has to think himself of being transformed into *nirmālyadhārīn* and supposed to chant the *nirmālyadhārī mantra* throughout. Then uprooted idol is laid on the *pīṭha* facing south and the *vāsanāśakti*-s are dissolved into Sun (*sūryamaṇḍala*). On its way to sea or river the idol is again laid in northern side of the temple complex on the sand spread out there as a bed

to dead body. Once again the *vāsanāśakti*-s are dissolved into disc of sun and after all these posthumous ritual observances the idol is taken to sea or river where it is disposed off. These rituals of seemingly human posthumous ritual observances are performed only when the worn out or broken idol is replaced with new one. The *pīṭha* is also disposed off in the same manner.

Then the new idol is taken out from water where it was kept immersed (*jalādhivāsa*) on the fourth day evening. It is kept on *bhadrapiṭha* and the rest of rituals are performed therein. At its completion the *bimba* is taken to *maṇḍapa* and ritually cleansed with varieties substances of medicinal properties. This is an elaborate ritual process, which is intended to clean the gross body of the deity by anointing oily substances. The important event in the *bimbaśuddhi* is the eye-opening (*netronmīlana*) ritual in which, as the name indicates, eyes of the idol are opened with golden needle and filled with mix of ghee and honey. At the end it is taken to *maṇḍapa* and kept close to *jīvakalaśa* in the ritual bed. These are the major rituals in the morning.

The highlight of the evening rituals is *dhyānādhivāsa* in which all the subtle elements that constitute the cosmic body of the deity is purified at all levels through yogic techniques of *prāṇāyāma*. Principally, the body

of the deity is created anew by dissolving and recreating the five elements. The same is done to the *bimba* along with *jīvakalaśa*. The broken *pīṭha* and *bimba* are removed on the seventh day and pending repair works to sanctum sanctorum and other extension buildings inside the temple complex are done after it. And every thing is made ready for the next day's core ritual event, i.e., the *pratiṣṭhā*.

The rituals of the eighth day onwards are similar to *nūtanapratīṣṭhā* rituals.

The elaborate ritual process of renovation described above does not feature in pre and post-*TS* literature alike. In the *PM*, *ŚN* and *VS* the rituals of renovation are comparatively simple and not well elaborated. *PM*, in its 21st chapter, mainly deals with the rituals to be done in the case of broken or dilapidated sanctum sanctorum and idol. The *ŚN* also treats the subject in the same manner, but rituals are more or less elaborated. The 24th *paṭala* of the *VS* is devoted to the *jīrṇoddhāra* rituals. It mainly deals with the replacement of broken *bimba*. The rituals are comparatively short and simple. It is in the *KS* that one could find the rituals being described in a coherent manner and systematic order. The additional feature is that it deals also with specific rituals to be done in the case of broken *pīṭha* as well *aṣṭabandha*. Even if it prescribes *saṅkoca* for

repairing the *prāsāda* and other buildings within the temple complex, the ritual procedures of it are not described. Thus the *KS* might be the first text to mention the *saṅkoca*.⁵⁹

Though these texts prescribe renovation rituals more or less in detail, for a clearer picture of it one has to rely on the *TS*. Among Kerala tantric ritual manuals it is in the *PB* and *TS* that the renovation rituals are systematically arranged and explained in comprehensive manner for practical purpose. The post-*TS* manuals follow the lead of the *TS* while explaining or modifying the renovation rituals.

Notes

- ¹ *āryāvartodbhavo'nyo vā kakārāṣṭakavarjitaḥ
kulīno nipuṇo dakṣo vinītaḥ priyadarśanaḥ
śaivasiddhāntatatvajñaḥ pratiṣṭhātantrapāragaḥ
vāstuvdyākṛtābhyāsa śśalyoddhāraviśāradaḥ
devāgnigurubhaktaśca tapasvī janavatsalaḥ
brahmacārī gr̥hastho vā satyavāk kṛtaniścayaḥ
śraddhadāno jitakrodhaḥ prasannavadanekṣaṇaḥ
kṛtajño'tha santuṣṭa śśāntātmā ca dṛṭhavrataḥ
sahiṣṇurūṛjitatatir jitadvando gataspr̥haḥ
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu sarvakṛcchinnaśaṃsayāḥ
samāyuktaḥ pare tatve virāgo vītamatsaraḥ
sarvaśāstrārthatatvajñaḥ śivaśāsanatparaḥ
mokṣadaḥ karuṇopeto mitāśī saṅgavarjitaḥ
guṇānabhīpsuḥ santuṣṭaḥ śivapūjākutūhalaiḥ
cīrṇāvidyāvratō dhīraḥ śāpānugrahakārakaḥ
suśīlaḥ sātvikō vāgmī pratyutpannamatirdhravā
medhāvī dhārmiko jyāyāṃstena liṅge pratiṣṭhite // ŚN // pp.46-7.*
- ² It has been observed that after twelfth century in South India the importance of *dīkṣā* is diminished due to rise of importance of *bhakti* and dominance of vedāntic thoughts. And it was widely regarded as a qualificatory rite for being a temple priest. See *Tantrābhīdhānakośa* III, p. 170.
- ³ VII. 2.
- ⁴ VII. 8.
- ⁵ VII. 90.
- ⁶ *abde cābde ca kartavyā dīkṣā śiṣyeṣvanugrahāt /
dīkṣādvādaśakairyastu dīkṣitaḥ sa śivaḥ smṛtaḥ / VII.138.*
- ⁷ *atha prakṣīṇadoṣāṇāṃ śivānuddhyānayogataḥ /
śaktipāto bhavet tena dhīprasādata'to'pi ca // 1 //*
garūpasadanam tasmācchivadīkṣābhilabhyate /
- ⁸ *malaikabandhaḥ prathamō dvitīyo malakarmavān // 4 //*
karmamāyāmalairyuktaḥ tṛtīyaḥ sakalaḥ smṛtaḥ /

⁹ The textual descriptions of signs of *śaktipāta* point to the fact that its impact can be felt at psycho-somatic levels of an individual. The body shows certain signs of *śaktipāta* like falling unconscious or appearance of goose bumps etc. Trilocana Śivācārya notes some of these signs as;
tatra tīvratareṇa sadyomuktiḥ tīvreṇa mūrccchā mandena kampaḥ mandatareṇa romāñjamityetat cihnātāratamyam bhavatītyarthaḥ / p.183. cited from *SP*, Vol. III. Fn.7a, P.7.

¹⁰ In some *Saiddhāntika* sources they are mentioned as *niradhikārā* and *sādhikaraṇā*. See *SP*, Vol. III, verses 6-7; *Acintyaviśvasādākhyā* (*AVS*), T.7, p.81, *niradhikārikā* in *Siddhāntaśekhara*, T.57, p.219.

¹¹ The *sādhikaraṇā* is found divided in slightly different way in the *SP* and other *Saiddhāntika* sources. The *SP* and *AVS* classify it into four categories. They are *sabījā*, *bījavarjitā*, *sādhikārā* and *niradhikārā*. According to the *SP*, the first one *sabījā* is given for those who can observe post- initiatory codes of conducts (*samayācāra*); whereas, the *bījavarjitā* is given to those who can not follow them. By receiving the *sādhikārā* initiation one gets eligible to do *nitya*, *naimittika* and *kāmya* rituals. It is mainly given to *sādhaka*-s and *ācārya*-s. The one who received *nirbījadīkṣā* becomes eligible to *nitya* rituals alone. Similarly, *samayin* and *putraka* are also not entitled to perform other than *nitya* and *naimittika* rituals.

iyaṃ caturvidhā proktā sabījā bījavarjitā /
sādhikārā niradhikārā yathāvadabhidhīyate // 8 //
samayācārasamyuktā sabījā jāyate nṛṇām /
nirbījā tvasamarthānām samayācāra varjitā // 9 //
nitye naimittike kāmye yasya syādadhikāritā /
sādhikārā bhaveddīkṣā sādhakācāryayorataḥ // 10 //
nirbījadīkṣitānām tu thatā samayiputrayaoh /
nityamātrādhikāritvāddīkṣā niradhikārikā // 11 //

¹² *atha nirbījikā dīkṣā dvidhā bhedo nigadyate /*
sadyo nirvāṇadā tvādyā cirānnirvāṇadā parā //
prārabdhasaṅgitāgamikakarmajālaṃ viśodhyate /
yayātyanta viraktānām sadyo nirvāṇadā tu sā //
prārabdhakarmaṇām bhogād yayā muktīm nirantrām /

yānti bālādayaḥ seyaṃ cirānnirnāṇadā bhavet // Siddhāntaśekhara, T. 57, p. 220.

Trilocana's commentary is as following;

athāsamarthānāṃ bālādīnāṃ samayācāravarjitā yāsau nirbījā / sā ca dvividhā sadyonirnāṇadā asadyonirvāṇadā ceti / tatra tāvat sadyonirvāṇā saṃsāradviṣāṃ vṛddhānāṃ vyādhitātmanāṃ dehārambhakarmādipāśa-

śodhinī / dvitīyā dehapātānantaraṃ mokṣapradā /

kālāgnyādīni śaktyantaṃ bhuvanāni śatadvayam / XVII. 6;

kālāgnisamjñāṃ kūṣmāṇḍaṃ hāṭakaṃ brahmavaṣṇave /

raudram ca bhuvanānyatra brahmāṇḍasthitāni śat // 9-10a

śūdrasyāpi śūdratvapaśubhāvavyāvartanācchivatvalakṣṇadvitīyajanma jātyu-

ddhāreṇa bhavatītyato dīkṣitaḥ śūdro na bhavati kintu śivasamskārajāṭasya

śivatvasambhavāt pūrvajanmavyapagamācca vedamantravyatiriktaśaivaman-

tratantraśravaṇapūjāsu yogyatā bhavati /

nādvijoyujyate siddhyā na ca nirvāṇamaśnute /

dvijopi hi yatastena kuryāt dvijasattamam //

nanu śivasamskārajātyuddhārācchūdrasya dvijatvamasticet kimiti

vedamantrānadhikāratvam iti codye brāhmaṇyāṃ brāhmaṇājāṭasyāpi

vaidikamantrairupanayanena saṃskṛtasya vaidikadvijasyaiva vededhikāraḥ

kāraṇānugūṇakāryatvāt tadvacchaivamantrasaṃskṛtasya tadanugūṇadvijatva-

siddhau tanmantrapūjādāvevādhikāra ityupapannam /

dīkṣābhīṣekavān bhakto brāhmaṇaḥ samayasthitaḥ /

parānugrahaṇvāgmī siddhasiddhāntapāraḥ // II.2.//

vādajalpavidandābhiḥ paratantraviḥhātakṛt /

sarvalakṣaṇasampannaḥ satyavādī dṛḍhavrataḥ /

nirdoṣo yogavid dāntaḥ karmajñāḥ kālavittamaḥ /

dīkṣādisaṃskṛtaḥ śānto vidvān akrodhano yuvā //

One of the predominant Pāñcarātra treatise Īśvarasaṃhitā speaks of three

kinds of initiations namely, Para, Vyūha and Vibhava dīkṣā-s. However, the

general purpose of these initiations is to make one eligible to do rituals

prescribed in the text alone.

evam dīkṣā trayaṃ cāpi dadyādekasya vā kramāt

sarvārāadhanayogyatvasiddhaye munipuṅgavāḥ // XXI. 460. //

atha vakṣyāmi saṅkṣepāt dīkṣāpūjādyanugraham /

śiṣyādhikārasiddhyartham nirvāṇārthaṃ ca yoginām // X.1. //

But according to *Sātvatasamhitā*, any one who craves to escape from the circle of birth and rebirth is eligible to receive initiation. Such a person has to observe *gurukulavāsa*.

samsārabhayabhītastu nirvāṇamabhivāṇjhati // XVI. 4 //

vairāgyadhīracapalaściraakālaṃ gurorgṛhe /

samsthito dāsabhāvena khedodvegavivarjitaḥ // 5 //

20 *dīyante siddhayaḥ sarvāḥ kṣīyante granthayopyataḥ /*

dīkṣātvamevaṃ dīkṣāyāḥ dharmādharmahṛdātmanaḥ // X.2. //

The *Lakṣmītantra* defines *dīkṣā* as following;

yad dyati kṣeṣakarmādīnī kṣayatyakhilam padam // 41.5 //

kṣapayitvā malaṃ sarvaṃ dadāti ca param padam /

dīkṣeti tena tatvajñair varṇyate vedapāragaiḥ // 6 //

21 *maṇḍalaṃ vidhinālikhya parivāravadaritam /*

darśayet yamihācāryaḥ samayī nāma sa smṛtaḥ // II. 41. //

ālīkya maṇḍalaṃ pūrvam parivārasamāyutam /

darśayecchiṣyamācāryo yamasau samayī smṛtaḥ // XI. 3. //

22 *maṇḍale devamārādhyā sāṅgamūrtim yathāvidhi /*

darśayet svayamācāryaḥ putrakonāma sa smṛtaḥ // II. 42 //

23 *pradarśya maṇḍalaṃ hutvā mantrānagnau yathāvidhi /*

dīkṣayet yaṃ guruḥ śiṣyaṃ sādhaḥ sa tu mantrabhāk // II.43. //

24 *maṇḍalārādhanahomavidhānairakhilaiḥ kramāt /*

dīkṣayet yaṃ guruḥ śiṣyaṃ sa tantrajñastu deśikaḥ // II.44 //

25 *abhiṣiktastu vijñeyo gururdhyānārcanādikṛt // II.45. //*

26 *devāntaṃ brāhmaṇasyoktaṃ varmāntaṃ kṣatriyasya tu /*

strīṇaṃ devītināmasyāt sā mūrtistasyakāmadā // X.63. //

27 *XI.1.*

28 *yogapaṭṭamuṣṇīṣaṃ cakram caivāṅgulīyakam // XI. 45. //*

adhikāraṃ svakīyaṃ ca tattvaṃ cāsmāi nivedayet /

29 *abde abdepicakartavyā dīkṣā śiṣyeṣvanugrahāt /*

yāgairdvādaśabhīryastu dīkṣito'sau hariḥ svayam // XI. 17. //

30 *sādhakasyānapatyasya daridrasya ca rogiṇaḥ / X. 20. //*

31 *snapayet vidhivattatra yathā śāstrārthadarśitam /*

samprāptakālaṃ manvāno vedhayedadhikāravit // VI.p.35. //

32 *śāntike pauṣṭike caiva nitye naimittike tathā /*
rājābhiṣecane caiva maholpātasya sambhave //
devabimbapraṭiṣṭhāyām jīrṇoddhāre viśeṣataḥ /
mantrādhikāreca thatā dīkṣām kuryāt prayatnataḥ // VI.p.45. //
 33 pp. 246-51.

34 *dīkṣa tanne praṭiṣṭhippān adhikāraavidhistataḥ /*
mantradīkṣā prakāratte collunniha samāsataḥ // I.5 //

35 see I. verses 6-14;
samskrte maṇḍape vahnim janippippū yathāvidhi /
sveṣṭamantreśasamyuktaṁ maṇḍale bhadrakādiyil // I. 6 //
kaṣāyādiniṛaccoru kalaśaṁ pūjayetsuddhīḥ /
śiṣyaṁ gavyamaśippicciṭṭandarānīya cāgrataḥ // 7 //
irutti bhūtasamhāraṁ sṛṣṭi mantrodayādiyum /
nyāsañca pūjayum ceyte mantrahstābhimarśanavum // 8 //
maṇḍalattil samarppiccu mantramūrttiṁ pradarśyaca /
tattvahomaṁ prakurvīta śiṣyante dehaśuddhaye // 9 //
munpil mūlena nūṛreṭṭu ghṛtāhutividhāyaca /
tatastatvaiḥ pṛthivyādyaiḥ ājyaṁ homiccu śaktitaḥ // 10 //
nivṛtyādyairañcukoṇḍu kalāyuktairapikramāt /
ādyam svātmani yojiccu pūrṇāhutyā pare suddhīḥ // 11 //
samidādidravyahomaṁ ceytu niṣkrtayestrataḥ /
śāntyai tu praṇavamkoṇḍum hutvājyaṁ tāvadantataḥ // 12 //
homaṁ muṭiccu tatrātha dhāraṇābhiriśodhite /
kṣetre kṣetrajñamāyojiccuṇḍākkīṭattvavigraham // 13 //
sakalīkṛtya kalaśamāṭi devāgratoguruḥ /
mantram kelpiccu śiṣyannu tadācārañca śikṣayet // 14 //

36 As it is given in The Shorter Rutledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy
 "Eclecticism in philosophy is the construction of a system of thought
 combining elements of the established systems of previous age. The term
 'eclecticism' is derived from the Greek verb *eklegein* / *eklegesthai* : to pick
 out, choose or select." p.212.

37 This idea is first presented at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales
 in the equope through her paper "Other People's Ritual: Ritual Eclecticism in
 Early Medieval Indian Religious" in 2000. Her point in short is that rituals

served two purposes in religious traditions. It served as an "identifying markers that divided one religious community from another". She adds further "the group of insiders explicitly acknowledges that other have rituals and, and then enjoins or permits the practice of those rituals along with the rituals specific to the group itself." This readiness to see the rituals of others as non-sectarian or trans-sectarian and accommodate it into the repertoire of a religious group is called ritual eclecticism. Pp. 399-400.

38 *My Rituals and My Gods: Ritual Exclusiveness in Medieval India*, p. 109.

39 *vipraḥ kulīnaḥ kṛtasaṃskriyaughaḥ svadhīṭavedāgamatatvavettā /*

varṇāśramācāraparo'dhidīkṣo dakṣastapasvī gururāstiko'stu //

40 *samyaksādhitamaṇḍape'tha janimajjivājvalyamānānaloddīpte*

svepsitamantradāivasamijyābhyujjvalanmaṇḍale /

kvāthodādisusambhṛtāñjitaḥaṭāḍhye dīkṣaṇīyam guruḥ

śuddhaṃ prāśitagavyamantrarupanīya sthāpayedagrataḥ // 57//

prthivyādipratisargavigrahaviśuddhyutpattimantrodaya-

nyāsārceśakarābhimarśavidhibhiḥ saṃśudhibuddhātmani /

tatrārādhitamaṇḍalādhigatadevekṣāttapuṇyocaye-

nvārabdhe'tha karotu tatvahanamaṃ tatsaṃskriyārhaṃ suddhīḥ // 58//

hutvājyaṃ munibhiḥ śatam vihitabījasthaiḥ prthivyādibhiḥ / 59 a/

41 see the commentary on the 58th verse. It begins as "iti maṇḍalānyabhidhāya

tatprasāṅgāt ācāryakasiddhaye avaśyakaraṇīyaṃ dīkṣā-vidhiṃ

saṅkṣepeṇāha."

42 see the *Vivaraṇa* commentary on the same verse. "evaṃ bahiraṅgāni

sādhanaṇyabhidhāya antaraṅgāni mantrādirūpāṇi sādhanaṇi vadanteṣāṃ

mantrāṇāṃ dīkṣāpūrvakameva śrotavyatvāt dīkṣāvidhānaṃ saṅkṣepeṇa

brūte"

43 *adhikāravatīṃ dīkṣāṃ atha vakṣye samāsataḥ /*

yayā yogyo bhavetcchiṣyaḥ pratiṣṭhāpakakarmaṇi //

44 *vyākhyānamāgamānāñca yogābhyāsaṃ ca dhāraṇā /*

avaśyakāryāṇyetāni svagrhe na gurorgṛhe //

45 *antyajamaṃ vā śvapākamaṃ vā nānumanyeta vaiṣṇavaḥ /*

46 This text is attributed to Nigamajñāna II, a contemporary of Sadāśiva, the last of the Vijayanagara emperors who reigned upto second half of the 16th century. See for more details T. Ganesan, *Two Śaiva Teachers of the*

Sixteenth Century: Nigamajñāna I and his Disciple Nigamapñāna II, Introduction, pp. iv-vi.

47 The seven sub-types of *ālaya* are *sthalakrama*, *prāsāda*, *prākāra*, *gopura*, *maṇḍapa*, *parivārālaya* and *vāstu*. The eight sub-types of *bimba* are *piṇḍikā*, *mūlaliṅga*, *bālaliṅga*, *daivikaliṅga*, *ārṣaliṅga*, *mānuṣaliṅga*, *bāṇaliṅga* and *balipīṭha*. The six types of images of Śiva are *bera*, *citra*, *citrābhāsa*, *śūla*, *kuṇḍa* and *siddhānta*.

48 *ākālpāntasthāsnubhāvenabhaktyā devasyaivaṃ sampratiṣṭhāpitasya /*
prāsādādisvāṅgajīrtiryadisyā duddhr̥yātastam navāṅgī karotu //
TS, XI.1.

49 cf. *Vimarśinī* comm. on TS, XI.97, *māsādadhikam prāsādakaraṇakālaścet*
niṣkrāmaṇam, tatorvākcet saṅkoca iti vikalpasya vibhāgaḥ /
50 *niṣkrāmaṇena vidhinātra tadantaraṅge vaikalybhāji vitanotu yathāpuram tat /*
saṅkocanena bahiraṅgavipadyadaśca niṣkrāmaṇena cirakālacikīrṣitaṃ cet //
TS, XI.2

51 *bālālayādisahitaṃ kalaśaikaikāryam cetidvidhā'tra niṣkrāmaṇam smaranti /*
saṅkocanam svavibhavanigūhanam syānniṣkrāmaṇakramamiha prathamam
bravīmi // TS, XI.3.

52 Among the *Āgama*-s *Kāmika*, *Kāraṇa* and *Vīra* deal extensively with the
installation rituals of *bālālaya*. Generally, ten kinds of *bālālaya* are referred
to in *Saiddhāntika* scriptures. They are *khaḍga*, *kūrca*, *citra*,
darpaṇapratibimba, *kumbha*, *sthaṇḍila*, *maṇḍala*, *pādukā*, *paṭa* and *bhitticitra*.
53 see PM, XXI.2; *mūlaprāsādabhāgair navanilayamataḥ pañcabhāgatribhāgaiḥ*
pañcāśatairvā vidadhyāt suṣiravibhajite vahninertrāmsato vā /
pāścātyadvāradeśe pavanadiśigataṃ mūlaveśmānurūpam /

dvāraṃ prākārabāhye navanilayamataścocchrayam veśmayogyam /
54 *kṣetrādhipādipratihārakāntair nirmālyadhāryādigurūttamāntaiḥ /*
hutvaikaśaḥ pūrvamatho yathāśaktyāvr̥tya sarpiṛjuhuyādamībhiḥ // XI. 12 //

55 *nirgatya viprān viduṣaḥ samūhya prasādya hemādisamarpaṇena /*
devam ca tattanmanunā praṇamya kṛtāñjaliḥ karma nivedayeta // 19 //

56 *pūjābimbamidaṃ viṣṇoḥ sthāpitaṃ pūrvasūribhiḥ /*
anena dūṣaṇenādyā dūṣitaṃ ceha vartate // 22 //
duṣṭabimbasya coddhāraḥ kartavya itīśāsanam /
āgamasya vayam kartum vyavasāyamupāśmahe // 23 //

- atredaṃ yadi kartavyaṃ āgamārthatayā bhavet /
bhavanto nonujānantu bhavemājñākarāvayam // 24 //
- 57 agre niṣadya praṇavena nāḍīyuktyaiva devābhidayā sthitaḥ san /
sajāgradādyātmadaśādhinnahārālayādyātmadaḷāgrakādyam // 41 //
- 58 dhyātvā kramāt kṣetramidaṃ guhārcā-
hṛdamburuṭ karṇikamabjayugmamam /
tāreṇa tejastaṭitābhamanta-
rāstūpikaṃ vyāpya ca mūlacakrāt // 42 //
- vikīrya puṣpāñjalimādinātha plutena viṣvag viṣuvatsaraṇyā /
prasārya saṃvyāptamidaṃ bahiṣṭhaprākāraṇiṣṭhaṃ parikalpya tena // 43 //
- grastaṃ samastaṃ parivārajātaṃ jālena mīnāniva saṃvibhāvya /
puṣpāñjaliṃ saṃhṛtimudrayātra kurvan samāhṛtya tataḥ krameṇa // 44 //
- saptormipañcāmbudhimātratārai-
rāmadyahārāpadamāntahāram /
ānīya cāntargatamaṇḍalāntaṃ
prāsādaniṣṭhaṃ ca nayet daśābhiḥ // 45 //
- tridvyekamātrapraṇavainmayet tad-
āgarbhamāpīṭhamathāṇubimbam /
ākṛṣya bimbāt tadapītitattva —
tāraiścidātmanyakhilaṃ tadantaḥ // 46 //
- tatkaramakālapratibodhanānte
tatropaviṣṭaḥ susamāhitātmā /
samādhisaṅkocanamuktanītyā
nivartya tasmin sakalaṃ suyojya // 47 //
- tad bimbakumbhāvaprthak prthak ca
vyāpyābhiṣicyāpyayatattvatāraiḥ /
tattatvakumbhena punaśca taistat
vyāpyāharet vā pratimāhṛdabje // 48 //
- tattadvibhūtyā bahiraṅgatonta-
raṅgādapītikramato vikṛṣya /
saṃyojya bimbasthacidātmanīmam

⁵⁹ *cinmātramākalpya niretu cātaḥ // 49 //*
gehe jīṛṇetha deveśe tattvāni sakalānyapi /
devatāścasamāyojya saṅkocam vā samācaret //



Chapter Seven

THE POST- *TANTRASAMUCCAYA* PHASE OF KERALA

TRADITION OF *TANTRA*

The *TS* continues its successful saga for last five centuries by exerting its mighty influences over all brahmanical tantric traditions of Kerala. One of the major reasons for this is that the metaphysical speculations and the ritual format laid down in it are so flexible that they can be applied in all forms of *vaidika- tantrika-smārta* worship in general. No other ritual manual had ever won such a trust and credibility of practicing priests and followers of *smārta-vaidika* tantrism in the religious and textual history of Kerala. So the emergence of the *TS* is indeed a milestone in the socio-cultural-religious history of Kerala. It cannot be said that such a text of high status invariably yielded positive outcomes alone in the long run; but there are negative impacts also. The obvious undesirable outcome is that it caused to degrade and die out other divergent brahmanical tantric traditions of Kerala. It is from within this broader context that the achievement and lasting influences of the *TS* are analyzed here.

It is imperative to know the structure and logic behind the arrangement of contents of the *TS*. And also what it is aimed to achieve as a text and tradition by setting a standard procedure for temple ritual cult. Answer for these natural questions can be found if the *TS* is looked at through different perspectives or in other words, by taking its socio-

cultural and political milieu into consideration. Because the fact is that as every text, the *TS* also reflects existing political scenario and raises concerns about some of such changing realities of time. All these points can be established one by one with adequate evidences from text itself. Let us start with the fundamentals i.e., structure and contents of the *TS*.

The Structure and Content of *Tantrasamuccaya*

The *TS* contains twelve chapters and they are constructed exactly in the order of rituals of construction of a new temple. The first six chapters are dealing with installation rituals and the next three are on procedures of worship (*pūjā*), details of materials placed in pots (*saṅghātadravya*-s) and rituals of festival (*utsava*), respectively. The rituals of *jīrṇoddhāra* are explained in the eleventh *paṭala* and remaining details on measurement of utensils etc. are given in the last chapter.

In the pre-*TS* manuals like *PM*, *ŚN* and *VS* the chapters do not follow a specific order and are arranged randomly. For example the first eight chapters in the *PM* describe the procedures to be followed while selecting an appropriate land for construction of a new temple and up to *liṅgalakṣaṇavidhi*. The very next chapter deals with installation rituals but contextually it is bound to explain the ritual procedures of tantric initiation in full detail. The entire chapter is devoted to that end. Again the

focus is turned back to installation rituals resuming with *jalādhivāsa*. But overall, the chapters follow a logical sequence in the *PM*. But it is not so in the case of the *ŚN*, although it closely follows the *PM* in structure to a great extent. It begins with the general rules of ritual (*arcanāviddhī*) then it provides the details of various *mantra*-s (*mantrasāadhanāpaṭala*), general rules of tantric fire worship, details of *mudra*-s etc. The rituals of initiation come next and temple-oriented ritual observances begin with eleventh chapter.

In short, the chapters in the *TS* follow a convincing logical sequence whereas in pre-*TS* manuals chapters are relatively less sequential. The *TS* is more practitioner-friendly, as the logical arrangement of contents in practical manuals makes the application of rituals much easier.

Eclectic Nature

Another important point is that the *TS* is not a text of any particular tantric cult. It is an eclectic ritual manual; for it deals with system of worship of several tantric cults. The ritual specifications of seven brahmanical deities share more or less equal space in the *TS*, though the *Pāñcarātra* cult of Vaiṣṇavisam predominates.

The Aim of Composition

Through the *TS* the author seeks to provide a general, at the same time distinct, structure and procedures of temple rituals of seven deities. As he states at the very beginning:

śrīśeśaseśaharisumbhajidāmbikeya

vighneśabhūtapatināmavibhinnabhūmnaḥ /

vakṣye parasya puruṣasya samānarūpa-

marcāvidhiṃ saha prthak ca viśeṣayuktam // 1.3 //

"the ritual procedures seemingly compatible with that of Viṣṇu are given together, at times specifically." It can be seen that early pre-*TS* manuals either deal with a cult of temple worship of a single deity i.e., Viṣṇu or Śiva. As per the available evidences the *KS* is the first text to deal with the cult of seven deities. But there the rituals of these deities are dealt with in seven separate sections. Structurally the *TS* has taken one step ahead of the *KS* as it deals with the cult of seven deities together. The *PB* also follows the same mode of presentation. Later writers followed this paradigm, particularly those who belonged to the same tradition i.e., the authors of the *P.Anu*, *K.Anu* and *T.Anu*.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Generalization

The generalization has its own advantages and disadvantages as well. As else were in India, professional priests of Kerala also are not interested in in-depth study of a ritual manual, such as locating a text within genre and subjecting it to textual analysis as scholars do. And they do not even hesitate to apply same standard model for worship of other deities, who fall outside the purview of seven brahmanical deities. So the disadvantages or demerits of a ritual manual are not at all matters of concern for ritualists, but they are domain of academic scholars. The demerits and technical flaws of the *TS* can be discerned only through thorough study and comparison of philosophical foundations and ritual peculiarities of each tantric cult. What strikes at first sight while going through the *TS* is that the author was not interested to note the subtle nuances of cult-specific practices and philosophical underpinnings. His only concern seems to provide a general practical structure to rituals of deities of varying cults. For example; in the seventh chapter the *TS* enumerates deities to be worshipped in *pīṭhapūjā*.

gurūnudag dakṣiṇato gaṇeśaṃ prapūjya

pīṭhasya yajedadhastāt /

ādhāraśaktiṃ prakṛtiṃ ca kūrmaṃ

svamantrato' nantavasundhare ca // VII.37. //

After worshipping *guru* and *Gaṇapati* on the left and right side of the *pīṭha* respectively, *ādhāraśakti*, *mūlaprakṛti*, *ādikūrma* and *ananta* are

to be worshipped from base to upwards. Generally, these are the deities to be worshipped in the *pīṭhapūjā* in the worship of seven deities according to the *TS*. In the pre-*TS* manuals that principally deal with the cult of Śiva alone, some of the above divinities do not find place in the worship of throne. The order of divinities given in the *PM* and *ŚN* are *ādhāraśakti*, *ananta* and *yogapīṭha* respectively. Notably, the *yogapīṭha* is not mentioned in the *PP*. So it shows that the other divinities form part of *pīṭhapūjā* in *TS* do not find space in the pre-*TS* pro-*Saiddhāntika* rituals manuals. Theologically, the throne represents the hierarchy of Śaiva cosmos according to Śaiva ritual manuals. In this context Goodall's observations deserve special mention. He observes that *kūrma* has no place in the Śaiva cosmos. He writes:

Most descriptions of *Ādhāraśakti* mention not just that she is white, but that she is as white as the milk-ocean, or, in Pāñcarātra accounts, that she is close to the 'milk-ocean', being placed there (among other entities) in the space between the penis and the navel, which is where one is to imagine the milk-ocean (e.g. *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* 12:2-4, *Lakṣmītantra* 36:2-8). The epithet *kṣīrodavarṇā* may therefore be a relic of a memory that this is a Vaiṣṇava borrowing, since the milk-ocean, and also the *kūrma*

(placed just above $\overline{\text{Adhāraśakti}}$ in the Pāñcarātra accounts just mentioned), has no place at the bottom of a Śaiva cosmos. The Kūrma, however may have an earlier independent origin [. . .].¹

This is just a one example and there are many such doctrinal disparities in ritual model proposed by the *TS*.

The Political Milieu and Inclinations of *Tantrasamuccaya*

The *TS* was composed at a time when the orthodox brahmanical values and the ideologies *bhakti* movement were increasingly influencing the religious views of general mass. Temples were changing from religious centers to influential political power centers.

The political inclination of the *TS* is obvious in its defense against the emergence or acceptance of non-brahmanical priestly class. The first and foremost evidence of this nature can be found in the description of defining characteristics of an ideal *ācārya* itself. The verse runs as following:

vipraḥ kulīnaḥ kṛtasamskriyaughaḥ svadhītavedāgamatattavettā /

varṇāśramācāraparo' dhidīkṣo dakṣastapasvī garurāstiko' stu // I.5 //

Here the verse begins by stating that the *ācārya* must be a brahmin (*vipraḥ*). Though generally the ritual manuals on temple observances are

written and intended for brahmin priests, they tend to highlight the rest of specific qualities other than his caste.² There must be some explicit reason for the author to bring it first among other essential qualities. This may be attributed to several socio-political circumstances of that time.

Similarly, in the context of prescribing the place from where the fire is to be brought for fire worship, texts generally refer to three sources namely *araṇīsambhava*, *arkāśmaja* and brought from *viprāvasthya* (brahmins abode).

viprāvasathyaṃ nibhṛtopanītaṃ arakkāśmajam

vāraṇīsambhavaṃ vā /

havyādamādāya nidhāya nābhau kravyādabhāgaṃ

nirṛtau nirasyet // IV.43 //

Here, the fire that is to be brought from brahmins house³ is the last choice according to pre-*TS* texts. Instead the preferences are given to that fire which came out as result of churning *araṇī*-s or *sūryakānta* stones. For example; the preferable fires according to the *VS* are :

mathitaṃ maṇijaṃ vātha śrotriyaḡārajaṃ tu vā // VII. 29. //

śarāveṇāgnimānīya tamastreṇa tu śodhayet /

It appears that here the author of the *TS* deliberately reversed the order, which points to his particular concern for brahmanical dominance

in the ritual observances. These are the direct evidences to show how the *TS* became an influential ritual manual by adhering strongly to core the orthodox brahmanical ideologies.

The author's efforts to bring the diverse religious cultures under the brahmanical control bore fruit with the emergence of the *ŚS* composed by his son and disciple Cennas Śaṅkaran Nampūtirippāḍu. The *ŚS* is not a master craft since it lacks many qualities of a ritual manual and incomplete in several respects. Even if it is modeled on his father's magnum opus, it is far below to the *TS* in its literary standards and quality. Moreover it is not at all user-friendly and not up to the expectations of thinking priestly class. It can be seen as an attempt to bring all the cults of worships into brahmanical fold and to extend religious territories.

The above discussion unfolds several factors that together made the *TS* a more influential ritual manual. Among them the most important one is that it appeals to the ideologies of upper castes. The royal patronage is also a vital reason for its everlasting success.

Later Phase of the *Tantrasamuccaya* Tradition: Texts and Authors

The post-*TS* phase is marked by the emergence of a new genre of literary works called *Anuṣṭhāna*-s. As the name suggests more importance

is given in these texts to rituals. The *TS* is not only a text but also a tradition. Its ideologies and value systems are carried further by his two disciples mainly through their writings. Among the known disciples of *Vimarśinī* commentator Śaṅkaran Nampūtiripāḍu, *Vivaraṇa* commentator Kainikkara Kṛṣṇan Nampūtiripāḍu and the disciple of former Puliyannūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri, who has been mentioned earlier as an author and commentator of several prominent works, are considered to be carriers of the *TS* tradition. The *Vivaraṇa* commentator is known to have had two disciples namely Toḷānūr Nārāyaṇa and Kaṛuttapāra Nārāyaṇa. The works of these two evidently follow the line of tradition of *Vivaraṇakāra* thoroughly. So these two authors also can be included into the line of preceptors. Another work fall within the same tradition is the *P.Anu.* .It is not yet known how he is linked with the preceptorial line of the *TS*.

The Other *Anuṣṭhāna*-s and their Importance

There are numerous *Anuṣṭhāna*-s like the three mentioned above namely, *Śivānuṣṭhāna*⁴, *Vaiṣṇavatantrānuṣṭhāna*⁵, and *Tantraśeṣasamuccayānuṣṭhāna*.⁶ They also post date the *TS* and evidently follow the structure and content of the *TS* or its commentators. The only striking difference is that the *TS* is metrical in style whereas the

Anuṣṭhāna-s are written in prose. Another point is that though the *TS* represents a particular ritual tradition, it could cut across all the boundaries and got welcomed within all familial traditions as an authentic work. The *Anuṣṭhāna*-s, on the other hand, never enjoyed this all-agreeable status but remained being confined within those familial traditions alone.

Iriññālakkuḍa Tradition

It is to be remembered that Iriññālakkuḍa tantric tradition is the only one of its kind without being superseded by the authority and increasing influences of the *TS* even now. There might be some reason for not being influenced by the *TS*, but it is not known for now. The families that belong to this territory of brahmin settlement follow distinct ritual procedures, which diverge in many points with that of the *TS*.

The textual roots of such a distinct tradition can be traced if there are enough textual sources available for analysis. But unfortunately none of them is available as easily as other texts do. That does not mean there are no textual sources at all, but accessibility of texts matters. As a part of fieldwork present researcher interviewed several members of tantric families, but the result was totally disappointing. When asked about the sources of rituals, they hesitatingly refer to some *Anuṣṭhāna*-s that they

still keep in their main households away from the eyes of public. But the Taraṇanallūr Padmanābhan Nampūtiri- who is considered to be a living authority on this tradition and a genuine scholar- is an exception. In a personal conversation he unhesitatingly disclosed that the *VS* and *NĀ* are the major source texts of his familial tradition. The only written record of this tradition accessible today, but to a select few, is a notebook prepared by Pantāl Vaidikan Dāmodaran Nampūtiri, who is a vedic priest by profession. And his family is credited to have produced a line of vedic priests for generations. But he has participated in numerous installation and renovation rituals performed by most of *tantrin*-s of Iriññālakkuḍa brahmin village. So his direct contact with several families, there by their ritual traditions and his practical experience equipped him to record the rituals in a systematic and legible manner. He set out to do this solely out of his curiosity. After he finished writing, many of who vehemently opposed initially, were desperately in need of it. And many of them keep a photocopy of the notebook in their secret possessions. So, due to scarcity and inaccessibility of other authentic first-hand sources nothing can be stated conclusively on this tradition and its historical roots.

According to a survey recently conducted by the organization of *tantrin*-s within the Iriññālakkuḍa brahmin settlement, there are 24

families of *tantrin*-s. Out of them 21 families are of *Yajurvedin*-s. These families are:

1. Veḷutteḍattu Padinjāre Taraṇanallūr Mana
2. Tekkiniyattu Taraṇanallūr Mana
3. Kiṭaṅgaśseri Taraṇanallūr Mana
4. Neḍumbiḷli Taraṇanallūr Mana
5. Nakaramaṇṇu Mana
6. Aṇimaṅgalattu Mana
7. Kāvanāṭṭu Mana
8. Payyappiḷli Mana
9. Mūriyāṭṭu Nakarṇu Mana
10. Tekkedam (Nandyārvalli)
11. Azakattu Mana
12. Kuṇḍil Malliśseri Mana
13. Erannūr Mana
14. Paṇḡāmparaṁbu Mana
15. Cerumukku Mana
16. Vaṭakkeṭattu Tāmarappiḷli Mana
17. Kalleli Tāmarappiḷli Mana

These families are said to be traditionally *tantrin*-s for several generations. The rest of the four families are said to have received the authority in recent past. They are:

18. Kuṣṭiyeli Nakarṇṇu Mana

19. Kaimukku Mana

20. Pāmbumekkāṭu Mana

21. Tānniyil Matiyatu Mana

The three families of *Ṛgvedin*-s are;

22. Ānāmparambu Mana

23. Meleḍattu Mana

24. Mūrkkānāṭṭu Mana (Kaimukku)

The ritualistic traditions inherited by these families are distinct from that of the *TS* tradition. The differences between the ritual practices of these two traditions are very wide and cannot be limited within the scope of the present thesis. Historically, Iriññālakkuḍa is one the earliest brahmin settlements in Kerala and their religious customs are unique to some extent from other vedic branches. And while going through the available manuscripts of their ritual manuals one is inclined to think that it might be the earliest of all tantric traditions in Kerala. It can be stated in the light of the available evidences that broadly the tantric traditions of Kerala can be divided into two namely, *TS* and Iriññālakkuḍa streams.

The Post-*Tantrasamuccaya* Kerala *Tantra* Scenario

In a broad sense, the present day ritual scenario of Kerala cannot be said as being totally based on the *TS* although this statement contrasts with the general perception. Though the general outline of the systems of worship throughout Kerala appears similar, there are variations in the order, *mantra*-s, number and presentation of *mudra*-s and even in the number and order of offerings (*upacāra*-s). There are regional and conceptual variations also. Particularly day-to-day temple rituals, customs of festivals etc. have regional variations and are predicated on certain indigenous beliefs and customs. That means certain customs are outside purview of textual traditions. For some there is a textual basis but for others the oral tradition is the source and authority. The only occasion in which the rituals performed adhering to rules and regulations laid down in the *TS* to a great extent is at the time of consecration of new temples as well as renovation rituals.

The post- *TS* period witnessed certain reforms in the ritual practices of Kerala. Reforms are mainly characterized either by inclusion of new elements into ritual repertoire and exclusion of certain rituals. Some of the rituals are modified. Among the revised rituals, some find their first appearance in the *TS* and later they became part of tantric practices, while

others evolved after the period of the *TS*. Many evidences of expansion of repertoire or gross and subtle modifications of rituals that marked the post-*TS* period can be cited from texts themselves. But the most significant and prevalent ones are taken up here for the analysis.

i) Inclusion of the New Ritual Elements

The installation of the flag mast (*dhvajapraṭiṣṭhā*) is an example for introduction of new rituals. The undeniable fact is that the actual practice of rituals precedes textual encoding. In the pre-*TS* ritual manuals the flag mast (*dhvaja*) is erected at the time of flag hoisting in festival and removed after the festival rituals over. There is no textual reference in the pre-*TS* manuals to rituals for installing flag mast permanently. It first appears in the *TS* (in second half of the sixth chapter (verses 116-140) and later it is found to have included in the post- *TS* manuals as an important ritual.

a. Bahuveravidhāna

The word *vera* / *bera* means body. So the *bahuvera* means numerous bodies of a deity. Generally, the materials prescribed for sculpting the idols of deities constitute *śilā* (rock), *ratna* (jewel), *loha* (metal), *dāru* (wood), *mṛt* (clay),⁷ *ālekhyā* (painting) and *kaṭuśarkkarā*

(mix of several materials of medicinal properties). If the idol is made up of other than first three materials,⁸ the ritual constituents like bathing, rubbing etc. could not be performed on it. In such instances some small icons representing the deity is installed within the sanctum sanctorum. The place where this method of worshipping a number of icons of the same deity except the major one is called to have being following *bahuveravidhāna*. Usually, in most of temples of *bahuveravidhāna* in Kerala the numbers of additional *bera*-s constitute three. The additional two icons except the main one are generally called *karmabimba* and *utsavabimba*. The daily, incidental and other rituals vary in these temples and are relatively much complicated.

It is not so easy to make an idol with clay in comparison to other materials. There are several texts including pre-*TS*, prescribing the elaborate process by which idols with clay can be made. The pre-*TS* texts that deal with the *bahuveravidhāna* are the *ŚN*, *ĪŚGP* and *VS*. Interestingly, the *PM* and *KS* do not deal with this. In the *TS*, at the end of the eleventh chapter one could see detailed discussion on the *śūlapraṭiṣṭhā* and renovation rituals of *bahuveravidhāna*. Among the post-*TS* ritual manuals some deal with these rituals while some other not.

It is generally discussed under the title *śūlapraṭiṣṭhā*. Here *śūla* means scaffold permanently made up of wooden sticks and pieces and coconut fibers. Once the model of the deity is prepared by fixing the wooden stakes and coconut fibers, it is installed inside the sanctum sanctorum. Then the remaining sculpting works such as administration of clay and finishing it in a perfect shape are done on that stake. If the idol is of *kaṭuśarkkarāyoga*, many materials of medicinal properties in addition to clay added so as to make a paste by which idol is made.

b. *Aśvatthopanayana* & *Mṛdaṅgopanayana*

Generally it is held that it is only human beings are divided by castes. But the fact is that sentient and insentient beings are also found divided in caste lines. In the ritual manuals, one of easy references of caste divisions attributed to insentient objects is linked with classification of lands. The plot in which the temple is to be built is classified into four, emulating the caste divisions, based on the fertility and other preferable qualities.

In the *aśvatthopanayana*, one of the rites of passage, the investiture ceremony (*upanayana*) is performed on a banyan (*aśvattha*) tree. The banyan tree, which is subjected to investiture, is usually the one that stands in front of the sanctum sanctorum. This is in practice even today

and done with great religious fervor. After the *upanayana* is over the marriage between the banyan tree and neem (*nimba*) tree is also held. This ritual is not found in the mainstream ritual manuals of Kerala.

Generally, the rituals of *aśvatthopanayana*, as it is widely in practice today in Kerala consist of two days. But according to certain ritual manuals it can be performed within a day in short. On the previous day the *asvatha* along with a neem tree is installed with rituals of installation of a *bimba*. It is to be noted that the rituals are predominantly Vaiṣṇava in nature and installation rituals by which the trees are installed are of Viṣṇu of *Pāñcarātra* cult. But here rituals are comparatively simple but all the core elements of installation are integrated into this ritual model. In fact the *aśvatthopanayana* does not form part of tantric ritual manuals and practices but generally, it forms part the generic texts, *Gṛhyasūtra*-s. It is performed by the *tantrin*-s in temples of Kerala.

On the second day, the sixteen rites of passage (*ṣoḍaśasaṃskārā*-s) as prescribed in the *Gṛhyasūtra* texts are done to both trees but priority is given to the *aśvattha*. During the rituals of *upanayana*, all constituent elements that form part of *upanayana* of a brahmin boy are also done to the *aśvattha*, exactly in the same manner. At the end, after the performance of remaining rites, the marriage between the *aśvattha* and *nimba* trees is

also held. The *aśvattha* which undergoes these rites of passage is considered divine and abode of divinely bodies. There are certain conventional rules and regulations to be followed once this ritual is done to the *aśvattha*. A light should be lit under it every day as it is done in the sanctum sanctorum. Both of the trees or their branches should not be cut off by using shaft or any such cutting tools. If they happen to be uprooted by any natural cause, they have to be left in the funeral fire which is worshipped by the *mantra* of *nirmālyadhārin*.

Similarly, in the *mṛdaṅgopanayana* the *upanayana*, rite of passage, is done to the *mṛdaṅga*- a musical instrument- (*mizāvu* in Malayalam). In this the rituals are of Śaiva by nature. The *Nandin* is invoked and worshipped in the *mṛdaṅga* after the performance of *upanayana*. At the end of the ritual the artist places *mṛdaṅga* on the throne temporarily made of rice, paddy and cloth and plays it for a while.

c. Re-defined Role of the Astrologer

One of the major turning points in the post-*TS* scenario is over emphasis on astrological predictions. This shift took the cult far away from its basic ideologies and practices, because many of the remedies prescribed by astrologers are in stark contrast with central ideologies of

tantrism. The only role attributed to an astrologer with regard to the temple matters is to prescribe the right *muhūrta*. The *TS* explicitly refers to this in the context of installation. The verse is as following;

*tatropaviśya sakalīkṛtacarcitātmā samprīṇitasvaguruvaryagaṇā-
dhināthaḥ /*

*viprān pratarpya tapanīyagavādidatvā mauhūrtikottamasamukta-
viviktagne // VI. 38 //*

Here the word "*mauhūrtikottamaḥ*" denotes the proficient astrologer. And as the name itself indicates prescribing the right *muhūrta* is only thing expected of him in this specific context. But the present day scenario is such that *tantrin*-s are not well equipped and confident enough to suggest any possible solutions in the instance of occurrence of any untoward incidents. Even when the situation demands their timely intervention and waiting for down to earth suggestions over simply and complicated issues, they never consult tantric scriptures that offer several practical solutions for many of the issues. On the other hand, invariably they stress on seeking an astrologer's help for every problem, sometimes even for trivial matters. It can be inferred that the fear of being susceptible to humanly mistakes keep away *tantrin*-s from suggesting any practical solution in such instances.

The astrological predictions are mostly based on three texts namely *Praśnānuṣṭhāna*, *Praśnamārga* and *Kṛṣṇīya*. This over dependence on astrology often did harm to the temple customs and ritual cult, as it can be understood from the words of temple authorities and devotees. The only way ahead of *tantrin*-s, and to some extent to temple authorities, is to get educated on rich textual and oral tantric traditions.

d. *Verpātupūjā*

The *verpātupūjā* is the one of the ritual remedies suggested by astrologers for freeing the deity out of the clutches of evil spirits or spirits of dead in general that possesses the body of the deity. The *verpātu* is a ritual in which these evil spirits are invoked from the body of the deity into a tiny image of Viṣṇu and pleased with certain ritual procedures. Subsequently they are dissolved into *sālagrāma* stone representing Viṣṇu. The ritual by which the spirits are thus dissolved is called *sāyujyapūjā*. Commonly it is held that these spirits possess the body of the deity when the rituals and other religious performances within temples are not observed properly. The signs that foretell a deity is possessed by spirits are (i) the testimony of devotees that they no longer feel the divine presence (ii) unprecedented events that badly affects the life of those who are associated with temple administration (iii) financial crisis and (iv)

waning influences of temple over community. No theoretical justification can be given to this ritual. Because the deity is said to be above all these influences and conceptually both deity and spirits belong to different planes in a cosmological hierarchy. Here one could see the clash of two diametrically opposite concepts. The end result is that ignorance prevails. It is to be stated that astrologers have a crucial role to play in showing the right path to the religious followers and abstaining from spreading superstitions.

ii) Disappearing Rituals

The ritual practices subjected to gradual disappearance are *dhyānasaṅkoca* and *bali* offerings such as *jayā*, *vijaya*, *durgā* and *kaumāra-bali*-s.

a. *Dhyānasaṅkoca*

The visualization process of the *dhyānasaṅkoca* and its purposes in the context of *jīrṇodhāra* are dealt with at greater length in the previous chapter. The *dhyānasaṅkoca* is performed for some other reasons other than the one discussed earlier. For instance, if some areas of sanctum sanctorum are to be repaired or reconstructed and it can be finished within a month, the *dhyānasaṅkoca* is prescribed. Unlike the visualization procedures of *bimbodhāra* ritual, here process slightly varies and new

elements in visualization are also added. Once all the constituent elements and beings surrounding the temple complex is brought to heart center of the deity, as performed prior to *jīvāvāhana*, *ācārya* has to visualize two lotuses, just above and below at heart center of the deity. Once it is done in imagination, he has to move on to next procedure as to visualize ambrosia oozing continuously from the upper lotus and getting the deity who is situated at the middle of lotuses drenched with the showering. While doing this *ācārya* has to find himself being seated at the petals of lower lotus (*adhahpadma*). Visualizing so for a while (*muhūrtamātram*) *ācārya* imaginatively comes out of the lower lotus and covers the idol with a piece of cloth and fastens it with *kūrca*. Then the doors of sanctum sanctorum are closed for maintenance work. The deity gets drenched till the construction works are over and subsequent rituals are performed. The deity is not worshipped during these days till the reparatory works are over. The *TS* beautifully describes the procedure as following:

viṣvagiāgarite vikṛṣya bahiraṅgādantaraṅgādapi /

svasminneva suyojite svavibhavaṁmeṣe cidekātmāni //

ūrdhvādhaḥ kramato' tra padmayugalaṁ dhyātvā tadāvārakam /

svecchāśaktivibhāvitam prthagataḥ

sambhāvya cādmobhidām // 11.99 //

tatrādhārasaroruhāgradalamadhyāsyordhvapadmodarāt—

ścyotadbhiḥ paritarpya devamupahāraiḥ ścitsudhātmakaiḥ /

tasmādeva tadīyamūrdhni nipatantīmāvikāsaṃ sudhā-

dhārāṃ sādhu vibhāvya tanmukulitaṃ

kuryād bahiṣṭhombujam // 100 //

ūrdhvābjena tadambujam kabalitaṃ kṛtvāvatāryātha tat

samveṣṭya triguṇātmakena mapareṇāraḥṣya cāstraujasā /

svasmin svoditacitsirāprasaraviśrāntyā sthitorcām vṛām

vastrādyaiḥ parirakṣya takṣabhiridaṃ veśmāñjasā kārayet // 101 //

But it is observed in the *KP* that in some familial traditions *ācārya* removes the covering every evening after the day's maintenance work and worships the deity as usual. And every day at the end of the ritual *saṅkoca* visualizations are done and protected by covering.⁹

Surprisingly, for unknown reasons this ritual procedure is totally extinct now. The present generation of *tantrin*-s are aware of this procedure but they did not have heard of it performed by any of their or other family members anywhere in Kerala. Most likely, it might not have been done for the last two centuries. This is one of the ritual procedures one could see only in texts but not in actual practice.

b. Bali Offerings

The peculiar *bali* offerings namely, *jayā*, *vijaya*, *durgā* and *kaumārabali*-s are offered to Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā and Skanda respectively. The *jayābali* is simply an extended version of *utsavabali*. But the pantheon of deities to whom the *bali* is offered are comparatively larger. The actual ritual procedures of *jayābali* start on previous day, on which *prāsādaśuddhi* rituals and worship of percussion instruments are performed as preliminary rites by the *tantrin*. After the *vādyapūjā*, *tantrin* has to play the instruments himself in a prescribed manner for a while. Then the experts of respective instruments will do the rest. By playing the instruments it is believed that the deities will be intimated about the ensuing ritual and taking it as token of invitation they will participate in it. In another sense it is a kind of invitation.

Some deities are specific only to *jayābali*, that they are not worshipped either in daily worship or *śrībhūtabali* or *utsavabali*. Its main purpose is to please *vāstudevata*-s who inhabit the temple complex. As mentioned earlier, many ways it is similar to *ustasavabali*. But the major difference is that after offering *bali* to the *dikpāla*-s a boundary with cooked rice is also made between space of each *dikpāla*-s. It is called as *daṇḍu* (stick) in Malayalam. And when offerings to *dikpāla*-s are over,

there will have made a boundary around the temple made of cooked rice more or less equal to the height of the *pīṭha*-s of *dikpālā*-s. The remarkable feature is the space between Indra (East) and Agni (South East) is left alone in the half way. At the end of worship of deities of inner circle, this vacant space is also filled with same cooked rice and cut with a bunch of *darbha* grass soon after performance of some rituals. It is called *daṇḍumurikkal* in Malayalam and at this juncture alone devotees are allowed to enter into the inner circle of the temple and pay their obeisance. This is really a visual treat, but on the other side very expensive too. It is held conventionally that if a person happens to cut or cross the *daṇḍu* accidentally or deliberately he will not die soon.¹⁰

It is not known why this mode of worship is also gone extinct, may be due to financial constraints. The other three *bali*-s i.e., *vijayabali*, *durgābali* and *kaumārabali* are not known to have performed for last two generations.

iii) Modification of Rituals: the *Bālālayapraṭiṣṭhā*

The *bālālayapraṭiṣṭhā* is mentioned in all ritual manuals of Kerala but current mode of practice has got no textual sanction. It is prescribed in the instance if maintenance works have to be done to the *prāsāda*. In that

case the texts prescribe to build a temporary makeshift similar in shape within the temple compound.¹¹ Then *jīva* from *bimba* is invoked into *kalaśa* and joined to new *bimba* while installing it in the *bālālaya*. After the invocation is over the main *bimba* is protected being covered with wooden cage¹² or any other prescribed materials. But what is in practice nowadays widely is *bimba* along with *pīṭha* uprooted from the sanctum sanctorum and taken it to *bālālaya* and installed there. Remarkably, there is not textual sanction for this. But it has become a fashion nowadays. This might be in all probability a post-*TS* phenomenon. Financial constraint may be the major reason because all that is done while the time of consecration of new *prāsāda* or *bimba* has to be done in the case of *bālālayapratīṣṭhā* also. So the financial burden is double-fold and many of the temples of low income could not afford this.

To conclude, these are major changes that mark post-*TS* ritual scenario in Kerala. But this does not tell complete story of changes that took over temple-oriented ritualistic traditions. For want of space many of complex and subtle ritual elements are not included in the discussion. Most of these changes that could not be traced in texts are part of oral tradition. So, oral tradition exceeds all the boundaries of textual tradition. Therefore, any study that purports to record the inner and outer working

mechanisms of a ritualistic tradition has to pay considerable attention to characteristically ever dynamic and constantly evolving oral tradition also.

Notes

- ¹ *Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya: A Twelfth- century South Indian Prescription for the Visualization of Sadāśiva and his retinue*, p.117.
- ² According to the *PM* the necessary qualities of a *ācārya* are as following:
āryāvartasamudbhavo vinayavān vāgmī kulīno yuvā
medhāvī kuśalaḥ kriyāsu viṣayeṣvandhaḥ śucir dhārmikaḥ /
pratyutpannamatiśśivāgamarato dakṣastapasvī satām
mānyo devagurudvijāgniṣuparaṃbhakto bhavetsādhakaḥ // I. 12.//
 In another place it is said that;
bhaktastapasvī dhanavān praśāntaḥ siddhāntadīkṣākṣapitāghaśuddhaḥ
kartuṃ pratiṣṭhāmucitastatohaṃ dīkṣāṃ pravakṣye prathamam samāsāt // IX.
8. //
- ³ Here word *avasathya* is interpreted by Kuzikkāḍu and K.P.C Anjujan Bhaṭṭatirippādu as kitchen.
- ⁴ IFP. T. 825.
- ⁵ IFP.T. 907.
- ⁶ IFP. T.807.
- ⁷ *pratimā yoni bhedena pañcadhā parikīrtitā /*
śailam ratnam tathā lauham dāravam mārṭikam thatā //
pratimā' ṣṭavidhā smṛteti bhāgavate / ṣoḍheti siddhāntasāre / Vimarśinī, TS.
 XI. 112.
- ⁸ *tatra maṇiloḥaśilāpratimāḥ ekaberavidhānena sthāpyāḥ / itarā bahuveravidhā-*
nena / tatramurārīrāha- ekaberaṃ śilālohamāṇijaṃ sarvadeveṣyate / mṛddāru-
jaṃ thatālekhyam bauveramiti sthitiḥ // iti / ibid.
- ⁹ Sixth edition, p.146.
- ¹⁰ See *PB*, Third edition, pp. 296-330.
- ¹¹ The exact location, measurement and other details to be observed while constructing is *bālālaya* is given almost in similar fashion in pre-*TS* ritual manuals. In the 21st chapter *PM* lays down rules as it has to be built in īśāna direction.
aiśānyām diśi tasya gehamabhitaḥ kṛtvā navaṃ mandiram /
tatpārśve caturaśrakam ca purataḥ kuryāt punarmanḍapam // 1 //
mūlaprāsādabhāgairavanilayamataḥ pañcabhāgastrībhaḡaiḥ /

pañcāṃśairvā vidadhyāt suṣiravibhajite vahninetrāmśato vā //
pāścātyadvāradeśe pavanadiśigataṃ mūlaveśmānurūpaṃ /
dvāraṃ prākārabāhye navanilayamataścocchrayaṃ veśma योग्याम् // 2 //;
 cf. KS,

aindreśānavibhāge vā someśānāndare'pi vā /
kṛtvā kāṣṭhamayaṃ gehaṃ mahatvaṃ prākārabāhyataḥ //
nāge śeṣe' thavā mūlaprāsādasyānurūpataḥ /
prāsādābhimukhadvāraṃ tadagre maṇḍapaṃ śubhaṃ //
mūlālayā' dakṣiṇabhāgasamsthaṃ
maṇḍapaṃ śilpibhīralpabimbam
prakalpayellauhikamāṅghripaṃ vā // TS, XI.4. //

The *Āgama*-s prescribe several materials by which the *bālabimba* can be made. They include metal, piece of rocks, wood and clay. *lohaśailakujaīrbālaliṅgamevaṃ vidhīyate / Kāmika*. It is not necessary to have a new idol installed in *bālālayapratīṣṭhā*. There is a provision that other secondary materials representing idol can also be used. For example; *khadga* (sword), *kūrca* tied by *darbha* grass, *darpaṇa* (mirror), *kumbha*, (pot) *sthaṇḍila*, *maṇḍala* (diagram), *paṭaṃ* (piece of cloth), *bhitticitra* (wall painting) can be used as representatives.

khadge ca kūrcaḥ ca darpaṇe pratibimbake /
kumbhe ca sthaṇḍile caiva maṇḍale pādūke' pi vā //
paṭe vā bhitticitre vā bālaliṅgārthakaṃ yajet /
phalakaiḥ pañjaraṃ kṛtvā samyagrakṣet / ekadā nityaṃ dīpanivedyaṃ ca
darśayet / P. Anu, P. 402.

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SECTION THREE

TRANSMISSION: FORMAL AND INFORMAL METHODS

Chapter Eight

INFORMAL TRANSMISSION: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the previous section a general outline of distinct nature of Kerala tantric rituals are given. In this chapter an attempt is made to look at how the traditional wisdom is imparted to next generation of *tantrin*-s, mostly based on the evidences gleaned from textual as well as oral sources. As is known there are formal and informal systems of transmission of knowledge. Before going for a deeper analysis of formal and informal methods of transmission it is necessary to know how a tradition operates from within and outside. Though the word tradition encompasses wide range of semantic spectrum, here the emphasis is laid on ritualistic tradition alone. Broadly, the ritualistic traditions in India can be divided into vedic and tantric streams. There are similarities and contrasts between these traditions at all levels. And the vedic system of education is seriously studied by several scholars from different perspectives within India and outside. Here it is intended to bring to light the certain conspicuous elements of transmission of ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra*.

The Tradition Defined

The word tradition derives from the Latin *traditio* meaning to transmit, hand over, to give for safe keeping. A tradition is defined in several ways. According to one definition it is "something passed down

from one generation to next, generally by informal means, with little or no change in transmission of that item or in the item that is transmitted."¹ The word tradition connotes several things. In a general sense it is defined as a something which is transmitted or handed down. It can be material objects, beliefs and practices, images of persons and events, practices and institutions. The Sanskrit word "*paramparā* (*pāramparyā*)" that is often employed to refer to a tradition also alludes to an uninterrupted succession. The transmission can be said in simple terms as a flow of a body of traditional beliefs and practices from a master to a disciple. In a ritualistic tantric tradition the rituals and a governing body of philosophical concepts are handed down or transmitted mainly through oral means. It does not mean that the importance of textual transmission is totally underplayed in tantric traditions.

Effective Transmission

The success of transmission depends upon several factors. Among them the first and foremost is the eligibility of the master and his disciple. A master must be one who is well-versed in the inner and outer dynamics of tradition. And all the more importantly, he should be capable of communicating the wisdom to disciple in a comprehensive manner. In general sense, transmission is all about communication that takes place

between two or more individuals. The eligibility of a disciple, particularly his / her intellectual competency, is also an important factor. The right communication takes place when all these factors are present in right proportions in a learning context. In essence, a disciple should possess or cultivate the qualities of an ideal master in course of time because he is supposedly the next person to impart the wisdom to following generations. That is, the present disciple is the future master. This is how a tradition breathes its life and continues to flow down and flourish. The competent and insightful disciples will imbibe the tradition into his-own capacity and take it further on the right path. The moderate and mediocre disciples will follow the traditional wisdom as such without properly digesting the gnostic values and its practical implications. It is such less competent and efficient candidates who often cause the tradition to move away from its central principles.

The Significance of *Guru* in Tantric Traditions

These are the general perceptions regarding the modes of transmission in all oral / textual traditions. All these common elements form part of tantric mode of transmission also. Notably, in tantrism, the *guru* or the master is not merely someone who teaches a text or system of worship. He is placed above all mundane and metaphysical principles and

even the scriptures are held just below to him in a hierarchy. Whose grace enables a disciple to go deep into the conventional religious wisdom. The disciple is in normal circumstances the son of the teacher or one who belong to the same family in a patriarchal system. This is against general trend of pan-Indian tantric traditions like *Śrīvidyā*, *Trika*, *Krama* and *Kaula*, as texts belong to these cults time and again found warning against initiating one's own son into a tradition and treating him as one's disciple.² Despite the transmission taking place within a tradition, there are instances where the members of other tantric traditions were also welcomed and offered normal course of education.

In fact, the education begins only after initiation. The initiation is not received right at the moment one comes in direct contact with a *guru*. Scriptures suggest that one who is desirous of being a tantric practitioner must stay with *guru* for a span of time from one year to four years. By that time both will know each other well and gradually a relationship develops between them. If this does not work well for both *guru* and disciple, they are free to leave each other at any time. But if the *guru* finds that the disciple is genuine and intellectually competent to fathom the depths of traditional wisdom he will wait for the right time to initiate the disciple. Whereas, from disciple's point of view if he feels that the *guru* is capable

of leading him through the right path he can ask him to consider him as disciple and lead him in his spiritual life. According to central ideologies of Śaivism, the fall of grace (*śaktipāta*) may occur at any time while staying with *guru*. It can also happen right at the time of rituals of initiation. The intensity of *śaktipāta* determines how far the disciple will go in his spiritual journey.

After the initiation the *guru* will start to educate the disciple mainly through the oral means. Since the tantric practices involve a lot of physical activities like showing *mudra*-s and other body techniques they will be shown to him either by the *guru* himself or he will get it done through his other disciples. However, the major techniques or traditional secrets are imparted directly by the *guru* himself. It is to be noted that this kind of education is predominantly individualistic in nature and not collective.

The effectiveness of transmission is not only predicated on the intellectual competency of disciples. It is also based on the temperament and conduct of the disciple. The conduct and perseverance of disciples are taken into consideration and pace of education is decided based on these qualities. The striking aspect of the method of tantric education is that it is not a disciple's right to know everything from a master that he teaches

his other disciples. Though all disciples are of equal importance to a *guru*, he may not hold such an egalitarian view while teaching. The general subjects are taught to every one alike but when it comes to specific subject he teaches in accordance with disciple's inclination and perseverance. Though one can accuse the master for his partiality, it may be proved true from a master's point of view.

While learning fundamentals of traditional religious observances, an initiate gradually gets glimpse of scriptures and learns how to read them in a context. By this time he will have ascended in the hierarchy to *putraka* and *sādhaka* levels of initiates. The *putraka* is one who knows the fundamental scriptures and their contents very well and who is qualified for doing rituals for himself (*ātmārtha*) and others (*parārtha*). It can be seen that texts are very much concerned about the religious observances of *sādhaka*-s because practical success in their intense methods turns them into ideal *guru*-s in future. The *sādhaka* has to be engaged in experimentation and perfection of techniques imparted by the *guru* and laid down in scriptures. He is not supposed to do rituals for others but expected to confine himself to seclusion and focus on attainment of *siddhi*-s.

In the next step, the initiate ascends to the level of *ācārya*. A *ācārya* is one who knows well the inner dynamics of a tradition and well-versed in scriptures. More over, he will be in a position to interpret scriptures in an independent manner and teach others. He is also entrusted with the power to initiate others into the tradition.

It is not wise to believe that all students under guidance of teacher will come out as equally knowledgeable and competent after formal learning. Due to several reasons a person may not complete his education at a stretch or under a single teacher. Some will finish triumphantly the whole process while others will quit in the middle.

This is how the transmission takes place within tantric traditions in general. Remarkably, the pre-*TS* ritual manuals of late medieval period suggest that this mode of transmission was prevalent in Kerala. But other than these textual evidences, we have no other historical evidences to corroborate this argument at present. The verbal testimony is also can be taken as a valid proof in this context. But at present it is far more difficult to find someone who has been educated in a traditional manner.

Kerala *Tantra*: A Temple-Oriented Ritualistic Cult

The Kerala tantric tradition can be distinguished from other tantric traditions for its main focus is on public temple worship. The temples

were seen not as a mere public centers but a system which fosters salvific needs of religious followers. But evidently they were later turned into mere centers for collective worship as well as powerful political centers.

Vedic Cult and Kerala *Tantra*

The evolution of ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra* has to be located within orthodox vedic ritualistic tradition of Kerala. It is within that vedic ritualistic fold the Kerala *tantra* has evolved and flourished. The evidences suggest that the chief rituals at temple were conducted at early times by those priests who hailed from the family of vedic priests. The interesting point is that many of the tantric adepts were equally well-versed in vedic rituals also. Some of the authors of tantric ritual manuals are also known to have written texts on *vaidika-smārta* and *grhya* rituals. One of the important points to be kept in mind always is that vedic beliefs and practices dominate in the ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra*.

This scenario is slightly different in neighboring states like Karnataka and Tamilnadu. There others, except *smārta* brahmins, either belong to Śaiva or *Pāñcarātra* or *Vaikhānasa* traditions. Once initiated into a tantric cult they observe the religious practices of both vedic and tantric traditions giving equal weightage to either. And when he dies the *antyeṣṭi* is performed first as prescribed in vedic texts and then it is

followed by its parallel posthumous tantric ritual. But in the case of priests of Kerala, they always represent vedic religion throughout their life span. All the rites from his birth to pyre are performed according to vedic rites. And tantric rituals and practices do not have any influence on day to day activities of such priests.

As mentioned earlier, the evolution and growth of Kerala tantric tradition can not be isolated from the vedic ritualistic fold. The vedic ideologies and practices are inextricably interwoven in tantric religious practices of Kerala. And temples, which are predominantly tantric centers, have played a pivotal role in the spread of brahmanical religious views. Therefore in order to understand the history of Kerala *tantra*, it has to be situated within the context of religious history of Kerala itself. To have a complete picture one has to start from the Aryan influx to Kerala to subsequent brahmin settlements.

Cultural History of Kerala: A General Outline

The history of temples and ritual cult of Kerala starts with brahmin settlement, which constituted sixty-four settlements in total, thirty-two in Tulunadu and thirty-two other original settlements in Kerala. Though started earlier around fourth century A.D. these settlements were established and became prosperous by the eighth century A.D. during the

rein of Perumals of Kerala. These settlements were semi-autonomous in character. According to *Keraḷotpatti*, a seventeenth century chronicle on the history of Kerala, some of these were specialized in *Purāṇavṛtti*, others in *Tantravṛtti* and some others in *Mantravṛtti*.³ The remarkable fact is that these settlements were established and flourished around temples⁴ and they possessed unimaginable quantity of land properties, called 'Devasvam' inscriptional records. Many of these properties are given as a gift by chieftains and landlords that in turn went to brahmins and those who do service to temples as well as intervene in day to day activities. Nevertheless, temples have no role to play in the religious life of an orthodox brahmin. Despite of it, migrating brahmins chose to expand their religion and practice their autonomy under the shadow of temples. As noted by Kesavan Veluthat, a famous Kerala historian, each settlement had its *grāmakṣetra* and often the name of the village is derived from that of the temple.⁵

The political administration of villages and temples were carried out by a general body which constituted by brahmins population. This general body is known as *Ūr*, *Ūrār* or *Ūrāḷar*. From this general body the members of the executive committee were selected and this executive is known as *paraṭai* or *pariṭai* or *paraṭaiyār* (*pariṣad*). The major duty of this

committee was to look into day-to-day affairs of temples. The duty to appoint the priests (*śānti*) and professional hereditary reciters of *Mahābhārata* (*bhāṭṭar*) is entrusted with *Ūrāḷar* and *Paraṭaiyār*. And the code of conduct unanimously followed by all villages called *Mūzikkaḷam kaccam* (also known in the inscriptions as *Mūzikkaḷa vyavastai*, *Mūzikkaḷattu oḷukkaṁ* and *Mūzikkaḷa ccavatai*),⁶ which laid down the general principles governing the procedure of village councils. Inscriptional findings suggest that the membership to this committee was restricted to land owning brahmins and also who were proficient in *Veda*-s as well as observed moral codes of conducts etc.⁷

The brahmins organized into groups known as *kaḷakam* and there were four predominant *kaḷakam*-s that are known to have existed during the later Cera period. They are *Perumcellūr*, *Payyannūr*, *Paṛavūr* and *Ceṅgannūr*. They were also part of King's Counsel, called *taḷi*-s and it constituted members from four settlements, namely *Paṛavūr*, *Mūzikkaḷam*, *Airāṇikkaḷam* and *Iriṇṇālakkuṭa*.⁸ These counsels functioned around temples situated around the Mahodayapura. Among them members belonging to *Mūzikkaḷam*, *Airāṇikkaḷam*, *Paṛavūr* and *Iriṇṇālakkuṭa* counsels were assembled during the meetings at temple precincts of *Meltaḷi*, *Kīḷṭaḷi*, *Neṭiyataḷi* and *Ciṇṇapuram* respectively.⁹

The membership of these assemblies passed on hereditary basis according to the rule of primogeniture.

Almost around by the eighth and ninth centuries the *bhakti* movements started to sweep and deeply influence the religious life of Kerala.¹⁰ For running its roots deep in the soil, temples were instrumental and served as institutional centers. And the *bhakti* as an ideological weapon mainly administered by ruling castes is used to spread the brahmanical ideology among mass and establish the cast differences more powerfully.¹¹ However, the *bhakti* movement had ever lasting impression on the religious history of Kerala. Its impact is also visible in the core ideological and practical spheres of the brahmins of Kerala.

In short, the early Cera period was noted for an administration system in which the monarch enjoyed the central authority to which brahmins counsels were semi-autonomous administrative group. The complete scenario takes a different turn with disintegration of Cera kingdom in the early twelfth century. Kesavan Veluthat observes this period in the history of Kerala as marked by major socio-economic transformations. He observes:

This period marked a definite stage in the history of Kerala in so far as the economic and social institutions, which had already

come into existence or which were taking shape under the centralized administration of Cera Kingdom of Mahodayapuram either underwent basic changes or got solidified during this period. In the absence of a central authority, and under less powerful chieftains, it was the temple-centered Brahman settlements, which had almost a pan-Kerala stamp were the only institutions with an all Kerala appeal that dictated the economic, social and cultural pattern of India.¹²

The other remarkable aspect to be noticed in connection with the predominance of autonomous brahmin settlement in post Cera period is that more and more new temples were consecrated and around which new brahmin settlements also were created.¹³ The new settlements were associated with one of the thirty-two original settlement and they are called *upagrāma*-s. Another noticeable feature is that the *Nālutaḷi* and settlements which form part of it lost their prominence during the post-Cera period.¹⁴ Kesavan Veluthat outlines the other prominent changes that took place during the post-Cera period as;

The semi-autonomous character of the Brahman settlements gradually gave way to complete autonomy. Each settlement was

becoming a law unto itself, even to the extent of forcing the local chieftains to submit to the conventions of the temple.¹⁵

The Temple and Society

Temples as religious and political power centers have influenced deeply the social life of Kerala. The influences were even greater during the post Cera-period when brahmin settlements dictated the terms. As an impact the caste differences were upheld and new caste distinctions were introduced. As noted by Kesavan Veluthat:

It could be seen how the temple grew gradually by consecrating more subordinate deities, instituting new festivals etc. More functionaries came to be dependent on the temple. More and more wealth came in the hands of temple committee. Upagrāmas (subsidiary settlements) began to be incorporated into the system. Arts and literature were encouraged in the form of sculpture, wall-painting, devadāsi dance, kūttu, (another form of dance performed by male dancers called cākkaimār etc. Education was promoted through the organization of the śālai. Even public utility services like hospitals and banking were attended to by the temple. It is even seen that the temple committee was places almost above the "wrath of kings and feudatories."¹⁶

Gradually, the settlements lost their corporate character and power of control of temple administration. And the properties shifted to the hands of a few. The Temple committees became a law unto themselves and many of the families became totally extinct without leaving any trace of their existence.

It is a known fact that early period onwards temples have played pivotal role in the cultural and political history of Kerala. Temples were not only the political power centers for high castes to exercise their autonomy and influence over lower strata of society but centers around which the caste system flourished and expanded into several sub-classes.

It was until the introduction of law enabling the low castes to enter into temples they were allowed only to enter the spaces allocated to them by the orthodoxy within a temple complex. The '*Kṣetrapraveśana viḷambaram*' (Temple Entry Proclamation) issued by Chithira Tirunnaḷ Balaramavarma in November 12, 1936 is considered to be one of the major turning points in the cultural history of Kerala. The proclamation lifted the ban imposed on low caste people of Travancore from entering into the temple premises. Following it, though a decade later, in 1947-48 the Maharaja of Cochin issued The Temple Entry Authorization Proclamation, which enabled all people of the state irrespective of their

castes to enter into temples. The enforcement of same law is seen introduced in Malabar also. Another revolutionary proclamation that challenged the brahmanical autonomy over religious matters in post colonial era was *Pāliyaṃ viḷambaram* (*Pāliyaṃ* Proclamation). The proclamation was made in 1987 under the leadership of Madhavji and P. Kerala Varma Raja, President of *Kṣetrasaṃrakṣaṇa samiti* at a meeting held in Paliyam, Trissur, comprising the renowned vedic and tantric priests of Kerala. It is unanimously agreed upon by the leaders of upper castes of that time that it is not by birth one becomes brahmin but by his deeds. Even if this move has not been well recorded in the pages of history of Kerala, it has long lasting impact on the religious history of Kerala. It is in 2008 that twenty two non-brahmin children, seven of them belonging to tribal community, of Pongini, near Panamaram, Wayanadu were given training in temple rituals by learned brahmin priests. At the end of the course they were conferred *pūjādhikāra mudrā*, a right to perform religious rites in temples. This revolutionary step ahead in the religious matters is taken by brahmins can be seen as an impact of *Pāliyaṃ* Proclamation.¹⁷

The unique occasion in which general public gets an opportunity to be a part of temple observance was in festival seasons. There are certain

roles assigned to people belonging to varying castes to be performed on the festival season. So festival is a public event in which participation of general public is also expected and sanctioned by high castes.

With respect to mass awareness of temple religious observances, the general public was totally unaware of rituals and practices that are performed within temple compounds. But certain beliefs and practices were followed by general public without knowing their connection with temple ritual practices. There are several mythological legends and practices associated with every temple in Kerala and most of them have nothing directly to do with the daily and incidental ritual practices.

However, the temple customs and practices had enormous impact on the political and cultural views of cast-ridden society of Kerala. It is not yet known the early form of temple cults when Aryans set their foot and started to settle around newly constructed temples. It can be inferred that typical *Saiddhāntika* or *Pāñcarātra* cults were prevalent at that time and continued until the time of Perumāḷs of Kerala. It is also not certain whether temples were categorized as *kuṭumbakṣetra* and *deśakṣetra* earlier as is done now.

The Role of *ācārya* / *tantrin* in Temple and Society

The role of *ācārya* was also a topic of discussion because the *ācārya*-s referred to in the early texts were not only the chief temple priests who conducted and supervised major rituals in temples. They were also celebrated *guru*-s who had several disciples learning and practicing under their guidance and supervision. And the most of temples had enjoyed royal patronage. Therefore the temples were constructed mainly for the patron and they were administered by a chief priest and his disciples. No one else had any role to play in the day to day function of temples. The courses of rituals in temples were decided by chief priests. Textual accounts suggest that chief priests were from orthodox brahmin families who fall in the traditional line of traditions of vedic-brahmins and privileged to conduct vedic sacrifices. So *ācārya*-s were equally well-versed in Veda-s and vedic rituals and at the same time followers of tantric tradition also. Most probably, the eldest son in the family only had the right to serve an officiating priest earlier times.

The Education System in Kerala: A Hawk's Eye View

Under the autonomous rule of brahmins nothing other than vedic religion is expected to have predominated in the early religious history of Kerala. It will be interesting to know how the method of vedic recitation

and ritual practices existed for a long time as such without being extinct. To know how a tradition preserved its customs and practices we have to see directly at the education system that enabled this to continue unchanged for centuries. The historical evidences suggest the existence of numerous institutions where education of *Veda*-s and allied subjects were given. These institutions were known as *śālai*-s. The terms used in inscriptional records to denote students and teachers are *caṭṭa*-s and *bhaṭṭa*-s respectively. The earliest record on the modus operandi of a *śālai* is found in Pārthivapuram copper plates dated A.D. 866. Out of the ninety-five seats allocated there forty- five were reserved for the candidates belonging to *Paviziya* (*Bahvṛca caraṇa*), thirty-six to *Taittirīya caraṇa*, and the rest of fourteen for *Talavakara caraṇa*. The admission procedures were strictly observed in these institutions. As observed by M.G.S Narayanan:

For admission to *śālai*, five *cāṭṭar* had to certify that a person is competent as a *Vaiyākaraṇa*, *Mīmāṃsaka* and *Purohita* and that he had 'ottu' or vedic training to equip him for *trairājyavyavahāra* or practice in the three kingdoms, probably the three kingdoms of Cera, Cola and Pāṇḍya.¹⁸

The remarkable aspect of the institutionalized learning is that notwithstanding the education of *Veda*-s and other *śāstrā*-s, military training was also included in the curriculum. There were other similar institutions known through the inscriptions functioning similar way. They are *Kantalūr*, *Valiyśālai Cālappuṛaṁ* and *Srīvallabhapperumcālai*.¹⁹ One of the Jain *Prākṛt* works of that time, *Kāvyamāla* written by Udyotanasūri from Rajasthan, provides a fairly clearly picture of a *sāḷai* which the hero of the poetry happens to see while wandering in Vijayapuri or Vijayanagari, situated in western part of South India. There he sees many groups of students learning various subjects and their involvement in multitude of curricular activities are described as following:

He found other learning painting, singing, practicing on musical instruments or staging plays or dancing. There were other groups inside the building engaged in discourses or teaching different sciences like *vyākaraṇa*, *buddhdaśana*, *mīmāṃsa*, *naiyāyikadarśana*, *anekāntavāda* or *lokāyata*. Some groups were practicing arts and sciences like *nimitta*, *mantra*, *yoga*, *anjana*, *kuhaka*, *dhātuvāda*, *jakhiṇi-siddhi*, *ghaṭṭa*, *jogmāla*, *mantramāla*, *gāruḍa*, *jyotiṣa*, *swapna śāstra*, *rasāyanaśāstra*, *chandah-vṛtti*,

nirukta, patrachedya, indrajāla, lepyakarma, visāgara tantra, valaya, bhūtatantrakarama etc.²⁰

This account seems to be a poetic mode of exaggeration; however, it throws some light on the education system of Kerala during the eighth century A.D. The other sources that discuss the vedic and tantric systems of education of Kerala are *Keraḷa KSC*²¹ and *KSSC*.²² According to their accounts, there were eighteen *Sabhāmaṭhā*-s²³ in Kerala and they are divided into *karmimaṭha*-s *śāstrasabhāmaṭha*-s and *sannyāsimāṭhā*-s. The former stood for providing education in *Veda*-s and vedic rituals. The *Trīśśūr* and *Tirunāvāya maṭha*-s are examples of this kinds of institutions. The *śāstrasabhāmaṭha*-s are the places where the various subjects of Sanskrit like *Vyākaraṇa*, *Nyāya* and *Mīmāṃsā* are taught. The institutions that offered courses in these traditional subjects are *Covvannūr sabhāmaṭha*, *Iṭakkaḷattūr*, *Kumbaḷa* and *Paṇḍita sabhāmaṭha* at Udayatuṅgeśvara. The *sannyāsi maṭhā*-s are believed to be instituted by the great *advaita* philosopher Śaṅkara.²⁴

We get a different picture of institutionalized vedic education during the later medieval period. Certain brahmin houses (*brahmacakṣetra*) and temples (*devakṣetra*) served as centers of education where students had to live together with their teachers and follow strictly the rules and

regulations. It is when this system also got gradually extinct owing to the lack of interest shown by students in the education of *Veda*-s, two prominent centers emerged as learning centers of two different branches of recitation of *Veda*-s. They are *Tirunāvāya* and *Tṛśśūr brahmasvam maṭha*-s. In any of the historical records do we never came across to the references of brahmin houses or institutions where *tantra* as an independent subject or along with *Veda*-s taught. So it can be inferred that tantric education was always confined to particular tantric families. And it was confined within a family for generations as it was exclusively a private affair unlike vedic education.

Kerala Tantra: Texts on Informal Mode of Transmission

It can be inferred from demonstrably early ritual manuals of Kerala *tantra* that there had been a typical tantric system of education prevalent in Kerala in the early medieval periods when the *Saiddhāntika* cult was so predominant. As described earlier, the major characteristic of the system is that after initiation a student stays at the residence of his teacher throughout his studentship. As it has been noted, education proper begins after the initiation of the student. It is unmistakable to think that texts reflect prevailing customs of a society. The pre-*TS* Kerala ritual manuals deal with elaborate process of rituals of initiation and hierarchies of

initiates. This shows that *Saiddhāntika* cult was prevalent here up to twelfth or thirteenth centuries A.D. The complete scenario changes since then. The rituals of initiation are replaced by *mantropadeśa* and a total change in outlook also can be seen taken over from around 15th century A.D. onwards. Therefore it can be inferred that in the early medieval period the tantric system of education was *Saiddhāntika* in nature. The texts produced around the 15th centuries A.D. onwards do not provide us any clue to existing tantric education system. So we are left with no choice but go for a logical inference.

In the absence of textual evidences, the sources that are equally valid and trust worthy are the verbal testimonies of living *tantrin*-s who have undergone conventional system of tantric education. It is an undeniable that much has been changed since the arrival of Europeans but some core elements of tantric education remain unchanged for generations. The following part of this chapter is devoted to explore into the core conventional methods of tantric education and to critically analyze its advantages and disadvantages.

The tantric education of a brahmin child begins only after the vedic rites of passage called *samāvartana*. It doesn't mean that the adults or aged can not learn. Any one can learn at any stage of their life provided

aspirant must be able to memorize textual passages or oral instructions. The priority is given to acquiring and developing skills to perform rituals. The ancillary subjects that form part of curriculum are not perceived as most important and given secondary status. In this system the student stays at his *guru's* home as a boarding resident until he learns to perform major rituals and acquires all the necessary skills to perform them without error. Minor mistakes are likely to be made by any one despite his expertise and knowledge of the subject.

The *Mantrapadeśa* Replaces *Dīkṣā*

The education proper begins with the *mantrapadeśa*, in which certain *mantra* or a set of *mantra*-s of traditional tantric deities of the *guru* or *śiṣya* are imparted. In the case of former, certain specific cults or *mantra*-s of a tradition is imparted to next generation at the beginning of education. In addition to it the *mantra*-s or cults of major familial deities of the disciple are also taught.²⁵ The technicalities of chanting the *mantra*-s are also taught at *mantrapadeśa*. The student is supposed to recite these *mantra*-s every day. The next step is to equip him to perform the vedic daily observances of a brahmin like the *sandhyāvandana* and *upasthāna*. Every day the *guru* checks in person or get it monitored by his senior disciples whether he performs properly the daily observance or not. Along

with this the necessary vedic *mantra*-s for tantric worship are also taught bit by bit in a prescribed manner. The interesting aspect of this mode of education is that the student first learns to recite vedic *mantra*-s properly and learns them by heart. It is only then the basic constituents of tantric worship are taught.

The vedic *mantra*-s constitute all the *ṛk*-s that are necessarily to be learned for the performance of tantric rituals. In certain familial traditions only the necessary vedic *mantra*-s are taught without stressing on the conventional methods of chanting. But in some other traditions the complete *mantra*-s of *R̥gveda* and *Yajurveda* are also included in the curriculum and taught following the strict conventional methods. It is a remarkable point that although in all contexts the worship is said to be predominantly tantric, there is no ritual without the presence of vedic *mantra*-s. The number of vedic *mantra*-s increase as the rituals become more complex and elaborated. And vedic *mantra*-s find their full expression in the tantric fire offerings. But it is interesting to note that the vedic *mantra*-s are evidently completely absent in the system worship practiced by mūssad-s, particularly in *Rurujidvidhāna*, of Kerala.

The curriculum of tantric worship is devised conventionally in such a way that the acquisition and mastering of simple skills proceeds to

complex ones. The two tools that are manipulated to their maximum potentials in this process are the memory and body. When potentials of these properties are tapped, the education process becomes more effective and perfect. Lack of one of these properties or falling below to expected caliber will not yield good result but even then such a person can impress onlookers by his performance. Remarkably, those who have commendable ability memorize the text and perform ritual skillfully without making errors in a given context are revered to be real scholars in this field. Added to their greatness are the qualities of practical vision, presence of mind and knowledge of other disciplines.

The Contexts of Learning

For making the education process easier and effective, the student is exposed to an artificial ritual context in the beginning in which except some ritual ingredients others are arranged as if in an actual ritual event. So the learning takes place in a context. The most important thing is no particular time schedule is observed in teaching. Initially, classes may follow a regular time schedule because it is necessary for the student to get into the track. There after learning will take place at anytime irrespective of the time and context depending upon the mood of teacher.

What the student has to do is to be ready to receive. But often it takes place in an actual ritual context.

The first step to be learned in a ritual is *dehaśuddhi* which involves the demonstration of *mudra*-s and yogic practices of *prāṇāyāma* and meditation. The teacher performs the activities along with recitation of their corresponding textual passages. After showing the same activity for a number of times the student is asked to perform in the same way. He has to combine the performance along with the recitation of textual passage. The observational learning plays the key role since every action displayed by the teacher has to be mimicked. Gradually, he is taught the *śaṅkhapūraṇa*, *ātmārādhana*, *pīṭhapūjā*, *mūrtipūjā* and *prasannapūjā* in the same manner. Once he masters the necessary bodily skills it is enough for him to reproduce the text from his memory. So the verbatim memorization the textual passages play the key role in this traditional mode of education.

One of the advantages of this education model is that the student gets enough exposure to actual ritual events as he has to travel all over the places along with teacher and participate in rituals that are conducted at different places. This enables him to have a wholesome idea of rituals and gradually develop skills to help his teacher practically in a ritual. Teachers

also take care to let all the external things to be done by the disciples under his supervision. In this process student acquires all the necessary skills and learns what materials are essential for performance of a ritual. So before learning a ritual he learns all that are necessary to perform such a ritual. This makes him a self sufficient priest in the process.

In this traditional system of education the disciple learns not only the wisdom of an oral tradition but also many other things. He has to closely follow his teacher and do all that is needed to help him in his day to day activities. In addition to it he may needs to do domestic works like cleaning the house, washing his teacher's clothes and arranging for daily rituals and so on. All these qualities necessitate the student to develop in to a matured efficient practitioner.

After learning textual passage of a ritual by heart and acquiring necessary bodily skills, he is allowed to perform it first under the supervision of his teacher. It doesn't matter how easily one can memorize verbatim the textual passage of a ritual, when it comes to actual performance there are chances to make mistakes and get confused time and again. There is a tradition that prior to actual performance of a ritual of deity for first time; the worshipper has to recite (*japa*) the *mantra* of major deity for a number of times. In majority of cases it will be the

mantra either of Viṣṇu or Śiva at least one lack times. This act reminds the strict rules to be observed by *sādhaka* before receiving the final level of initiation, i.e., of *ācārya*. In many traditions the very first ritual is performed at the temples of family deity. For example; members belonging to the Aṇḍalāḍi family first performs rituals at the Kaṇṇannūr Bhagavati Temple, those of Puliyannūr family at Brahmakuḷam temple, those of Kallūr family at Ceṇaṇaṅkunnattu temple and those of Kīzmuṇḍayūr at Covvallūr Śiva Temple. In other's cases it is done at *guru's* residence in a *svastika maṇḍala*. After the repeated performance of it for considerable number of times he learns how to do a ritual impressively without committing mistakes. Generally the *laghupūjā* either of Śiva or Viṣṇu is taught first and subsequently the worship of other deities based on the same referential framework. It is not necessary to do rituals of all deities after learning the ritual of each of them. On the other hand knowing how to perform a ritual of deity will do. In the next step the *saparivārapūjā* of all the deities are learned in the same manner. But here the teacher focuses and teaches the differentiating aspects of *saparivārapūjā* only. The *saparivārapūjā* is an extended version of *laghupūjā* in which deity is worshiped along with his or her whole retinues. When the teacher understands that the disciple has learned the ritual steps by heart he allows him to do it on his own. By this time he will

have learned how to prepare the place and other ingredients for a ritual. Meanwhile he learns the domestic rituals *gaṇapatiḥoma*, *bhagavatiseva* etc. After mastering the *saparivārapūjā*, the rituals of *utsava* from *śuddhi* to *tīrthasnāna* are taught to the disciple. Here too first he learns complete rituals of *utsava* of Śiva or Viṣṇu and then he only needs to know the difference in cult of other deity from this format.

The Stages in Learning Rituals

Four stages of practical learning of rituals can be distinguished. The first stage is of mastering the *laghupūjā* and once it is mastered he goes to the next stage in curriculum of learning *saparivārapūjā*. The third step is of mastering the rituals of *utsava* and last one is of *navīkaraṇa*. All these stages are interlinked and mutually inclusive. Therefore mastery over each stage is necessary to step on to following stage. The rituals associated with construction of a new temple namely, *ṣaḍādhārapratīṣṭhā* and *prāyaścitta* (expiatory rituals) usually do not form part of this curriculum and not often taught in the same manner. These rituals and rest are to be understood from texts or from the teachers themselves. Most importantly, the details of drawing various kinds of *maṇḍala*-s are also to be learned from practical experience because it is easy to learn from observing than teaching its textual passages.

One of the remarkable points is that Sanskrit education also forms part of tantric training. Ullūr and Vaṭakkumkūr provide a picture of Sanskrit education in Kerala, particularly among brahmins. This might be more or less the general system of education of Kerala irrespective of the subject a particular brahmin family is known for. After introduction of alphabets, a student learns Sanskrit along with the methods of *anvaya*. In the second level, the *Kāvya*-s like *Śrīrāmodanta*, *Śrīkṛṣṇavilāsakāvya*, *Raghuvamśa* and the texts like *Amarakośa* and *Kuvalayānda* are taught.²⁶ Learning basics of Sanskrit is necessary for every student but higher education in Sanskrit solely depends upon the pupil's interest and master's knowledge of them. This is the reason that only a small number of practicing *tantrin*-s of previous generations have sound knowledge in Sanskrit and remarkable command over it.

As mentioned earlier, verbatim memorization of text is given priority in this oral tradition of tantrism. It was never a matter of concern for teachers even if the disciple is not competent enough and not showing much interest in the Sanskrit education. What matters is whether the pupil can memorize the textual passages as such and skillfully perform the rituals in an actual situation. If he can, all of his short comings are overlooked. So this is more individualistic and absolutely one to one process.

Textual Transmission

It goes without saying that learning rituals means learning a text or texts. This general rule can be applied in the case of all hereditary priests of Kerala. As a part of present research, the present scholar has interviewed many of the leading *tantrin*-s of Kerala. It is interesting to note that last generation of *tantrin*-s knows at least one text by heart or is familiar with the contents of a text. All of them know by heart many verses of the *TS*, if not complete. The eighth *paṭala* of the *TS* is traditionally considered to be very important. It deals with *kalaśa* ingredients that are placed in the pots during the *dravyakalaśa* and *jīrṇoddhāra*. All the previous generations of *tantrin*-s know the eighth *paṭala* by heart and recited many of the verses from other *paṭala*-s too. This is applicable in the case of *tantrin*-s of Kerala in general. The *TS* has cast its spell over all tantric traditions of Kerala and has been holding its sway for generations. In an interview, Puṭayūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri recalled that along with the *TS* he got exposure to the *P. Anu* as it was part of curriculum. That means other than the *TS* other texts of regional importance were also part of curriculum in several familial traditions.

The contents in the texts are often presented in such a way that a practitioner could easily decipher the meanings and relate the ideas

logically. It appears that authors of these ritual manuals presupposed that the reader must have a firm foundation of an oral tradition. In short, a text occurs in a context and these texts present themselves within the context of an oral tradition. So unlike the conventional ways of teaching a text, the chapters are chosen randomly in accordance with context of teaching. Hence the general rule regarding the order of chapters may not be observed. For example, while teaching the *TS* the first two chapters are not taught initially, often the third or ninth chapters are taken up first. The order of chapters is decided on the basis of student's intellectual capacity and level of education. However it is the teacher's discretion and may not be consistent in all instances.

Traditionally only one text is taught as part of curriculum but not its commentary or commentaries. It is left to the student to read commentary of a text. Unfortunately, relatively a few *tantrin*-s are familiar with commentaries. Kerala has got a distinct tradition of commentators of tantric texts and many of them are less known, except those of the *TS*. Quite unfortunately, works of none of these commentators are given significant considerations they deserve even in academic studies. Beginning with several commentaries of *Prapañcasāra* many of the commentaries of fundamental texts like *VS*, *KS*

Bālaprabodhinī of the *TS* and *Vimarśinī* of the *ŚS* are unknown to the scholars of Kerala *tantra* even today. It does not mean that these commentaries do not find reference in any of the academic writing; they do. But a serious study of these is yet a desideratum.

The study of the tantric scripture begins when the student learns the basics of Sanskrit. In the study of scriptures priority is given to learning by heart the verses. The student's ability to split the verses into syntactical units and derive meanings is appreciated. This technique need not be necessarily applied in the study of *Anuṣṭhāna*-s because they are written in simple Sanskrit prose. It can be inferred that textual study is encouraged and there has been a tradition of collecting and reading ritual manuals or tantric philosophical texts in several traditions. The evidence for this argument can be traced in the works of pre and post-*TS* authors and commentators. Many of them cite or refer to dozens of tantric scriptures in their original writings or commentaries. And many of the leading tantric families across Kerala preserve considerable quantity of manuscripts in their private collections. To name a few Puṭayūr, Aṇḍalāḍi, Taraṇanallūr, Īkkāḍu, Vezappaṛambu, Puliyanūr, Kuṇḍikkāṭṭu, Kainikkara, Kunnattūr Paṭiñjāreṭattu, Putumana (Ambalappuzha) and Bradrakāḷi Mattappaḷli Illam have huge number of manuscript

collection. Not only these but many other brahmin houses in Kerala have huge manuscript repositories. But it is surprising to see that only a few authors or commentators are found to be aware of pan-Indian Āgamic tradition or *Pāñcarātra* traditions. To be specific, the commentator of the *PM* cites from several Āgamic sources and Īśānaśivagurudeva, who belongs to the line of authors of the *Paddhati* texts evidently found to have knowledge of most of the *Saiddhāntika* sources, including *Āgama*-s, *Upāgama*-s and *Paddhati* texts. He had access not only to wide range of *Saiddhāntika* sources but sources that fall outside the *Saiddhāntika* lore also. But on the other hand, the celebrated commentators of the *TS* do not cite or refer to *Āgama*-s or *Upāgama*-s and *Paddhati* texts (except the *ĪśGP*). Interestingly enough, the *Vivaraṇa* exegete is found to have had access to and knowledge of many of *Saiddhāntika* and *Pāñcarātra* sources. He was a scholar par excellence who surpassed and intellectually far exceeded his teacher's limitations to great extent. While reading his commentary one may get the impression that he had in-depth knowledge of intricacies of ritual observances. And in order to understand the intentions of the author of the *TS* in their own right and to locate the ideas in a wider context one should read *Vivaraṇa* commentary carefully. But unfortunately, the texts that are produced after the *TS* do not show any evidence of knowledge of pan- Indian Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions. That

shows at some juncture in the history of Kerala tantric tradition the connecting link between the Āgamic and Kerala tradition is lost or conveniently forgotten. The result is that a tradition which derived as an off shoot of pan-Indian Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions got confined to regional boundaries. Once the foundation is lost nothing will last longer no matter how strong the building blocks are. This is what exactly happened to Kerala *tantra* when it is viewed from a wider perspective. Without doubt, it can be sated that present generation of *tantrin*-s have completely lost sight of pan-Indian tantric traditions and are incapable of locating Kerala tantrism in a broader context.

Disadvantages of Traditional Methods

One of the drawbacks of this mode of teaching which unduly emphasis on rote learning is that the students are spoon fed and the need for self effort in learning is comparatively very limited. Students are moulded in such a way that they are conditioned to follow teacher's words as such and individual expeditions are often discouraged. Disciples need always keep an eye on how their teacher performs in a given situation and the same logic and action is executed by them in all situations irrespective of its significance or necessity. The teachers are considered to be

unquestionable authorities and on the other side of the coin they do not like to be questioned.

The Traditional *Tantrin*-s of Scholarship and Fame

Even if tantric practitioners are produced generation after generation in all familial traditions only a few stand out as towering figures and revered as real scholars. If we go back to two generations, five prominent scholars could be found unanimously accepted as real ambassadors of the tradition by traditionalists and scholars alike throughout Kerala. They are Aṇḍalāḍi Divākaran Nampūtiri (Valya Divākaran Nampūtiri), Putumana Dāmodaran Nampūtiri, Kalppuza Divākaran Nampūtirippāḍu, Kallūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri (Valya Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri) and Vezappaṛambu Parameśvaran Nampūtiri. They were contemporaries and known for their commendable knowledge and propagating the true spirit of Kerala *tantra*. They imbibed the traditional values and invoked them to core of their personality but lived the life of a complete orthodox brahmin. They were true representatives of orthodox brahmanical religion and ritualistic Kerala tantric tradition. Their area of interest can not be said to have confined to these two streams rather they were more or less equally masters of other fields also.

1. Aṇḍalāḍi Divākaran Nampūtiri (1909-1994): Aṇḍalāḍi is famous brahmin tantric family in Kerala situated at Pattambi, Palakkad district. It is said that there are hereditary *tantrin*-s of around 200 temples of Kerala for generations. Among the line of preceptors of the family Divākaran Nampūtiri occupies a special position for his scholarship of *Veda*-s and tantric system of worship. He was equally well- versed in the *Ṛgveda* and *tantra*. He has been a student of Brahmasvam Maṭham at Trīśśūr, from where he has mastered traditional vedic recital methods like *Padam*, *Jaṭa* and *Rathā*. He was a bright scholar of *Veda* as he passed the prestigious vedic examination known as "*Valya Kaḍannirikkal* " along with Pālakkāṭṭiri Vāsudevan Nampūtiri, conducted at Kaṭavallūr (Kaḍavallūr Anyonyam) in 1931. He had his Sanskrit education, mainly *Kāvya*-s, under his father and uncles namely, Pazayiṭam Vāsudevan Nampūtiri, Panniśseri Śaṅkaran Nampūtiri and Pūrāṭam Haridattan Nampūtiri. He was also a scholar of *Nyāya* which he learned from two well-known scholars namely, Polppākkara Dāmodaran Nampūtiri of Guruvāyūr and the Darśanakalānidhi Parīkṣit Thampurān of Thripunithura. His father Vāsudevan Nampūtirippāḍu and his uncles Divākaran Nampūtiri and Vāsudevan Nampūtiri were his mentors in Kerala *tantra*.

As it can be inferred from the references made by previous generation of practicing *tantrin*-s of Kerala, he was held to be authority on the subject among the tantric scholars. He has been the *sadasya* for *dvajapraṭiṣṭhā* and *drvavyakalaśa* (for four consecutive years) that held at Krishna Temple at Guruvayur, Tali Temple at Kozhikkode and Vatakkunnathan Temple at Trissur. The first ever *atirudra* conducted in Kerala at Vatakkunnathan Temple was held under his supervision. He is known to have closely associated with and considered to be right hand of the *tantrin* Cennas Paramesvaran Nampūtiri.

One of the works attributed to him is the commentary to *Saparyāsaptaka* which he co-authored with T.M. Trivikraman Nampūtiri and published by Guruvayur Devaswam in 1989. It is recalled by his family members that both Kalppuza Divākaran Nampūtirippāḍu and Aṇḍalāḍi Divākaran Nampūtiri co-authored a short Malayalam commentary on ŚS and given it for publication to Government College, Tripunithura. But unfortunately, when they contacted the publishers to know about the status after a few years it is informed that there is not such a work with them. No one heard of it since then.²⁷

He was a well-known figure among the other scholars of Kerala as well. Many awards came on his way and some of prestigious awards or

titles given to him are 1. *Tantraratna*- conferred by Guruvayurappan Sangeerthana Trust in 1972, 2. *Tantrasāgara*- conferred by Kanci Kama-koti Swamikal, 3. *Tantrśāstrabṛhaspati*- conferred by TVP, Aluva in 1986 and 4. *Oḷappamaṇṇa Puraskāram*- conferred by Brahmaswam Maṭham, Trīśśūr.

2. Putumana Dāmodaran Nampūtiri (1910 -1993): The popularity of the familial name Putumana is associated with Ambalappuzha Sreekrshnaswami Temple, owing to the fact that they are hereditary *tantrin*-s of the temple. This family is also holding the hereditary right of many of temples across Kerala. Among the line of tantric adepts the family produced for several generations, Dāmodaran Nampūtiri is accorded a distinct position. He was a scholar par excellence, for his expertise is not confined to a particular subject but extended to Sanskrit, Tantrism, vedic rituals and Kerala's traditional art form Kathakali. He learned the tantric rituals from Kuriyārūrupurattu Bhaṭṭatiri, who belonged to the line of familial traditions of Kunnattūr Paṭiñjāreṭattu. More than an orthodox *tantrin* he was also a popular social activist, for he had been a Panchayath President for over sixteen years.

He has contributed substantially to all his areas of his interest through his writings in both vernacular and Sanskrit. His writings

extended over several subjects and they can be categorized under various heads like *tantra*, vedic rituals, Sanskrit poems, Kathakali songs and *stotra*-s. Though he was a well known tantric preceptor his writings on the subject constitute just two works, they are *Kṣetraññāḷum Tantraprasthānavum* and *Kṣetracaitanyarahasyam*. The works on vedic rituals are *Kriyākramadīpikā* and *Jyotiragniṣṭoma*. The Sanskrit poetries are *Śrīkṛṣṇa Caritam*, *Kāḷiyamardanam*, *Yamakapadyanirmitā Ajāmiḷa-kathā*, *Kucela kathā bhujaṅgam* and *Apakvabhakti*. Interestingly, he has also written a couple of poetries for Kathakali performances in Sanskrit. They are *Saptāha Māhātmyam Āṭṭakkathā* and *Śākuntalam Āṭṭakkathā*. Other than these generic works there are 19 *stotra*-s also written by him.²⁸

Considering his sound knowledge and outstanding contributions to Kerala *tantra*, TVP has conferred on him the most prestigious title '*Tantraśāstrabṛhaspati*' in 1988.

Though he had several disciples, one of them is considered to be first and foremost of his disciples, it is Manayattārru Candraśekharaṇ Nampūtirippāḍu. The present chief priest of his family, Putumana Sreedharan Nampūtiri is his son and disciple.

3. Kalppuza Divākaraṇ Nampūtirippāḍu (1913-2000): He was one of the most venerated tantric scholars on temple rituals within the circles

of practicing priests of Kerala. He has served greater part of his life as principal of TVP. Many of the practicing priests of Kerala at present are his direct or indirect pupils, for he was privileged to have a great number of students under his guidance.

He was considered to be an authority on temple rituals. He was equally well-versed in Sanskrit and had a commendable knowledge on vedic rituals. The remarkable aspect of his scholarship was that his deep knowledge of varying ritualistic traditions of Kerala *tantra*. A short Malayalam commentary on the ŚS is the lone work on *tantra* authored by him. But he helped to edit several texts like *KP* and *Tantradarpaṇa*. Considering his knowledge and contributions to Kerala *tantra*, TVP conferred him the prestigious title, *Tantraśāstraḥṛhaspati* in 1986.

He was trained and flourished under the tutelage and guidance of Kunnattur Paṭiñājāreṭattu Kṛṣṇan Bhaṭṭatirippāḍu (1879- 1964), who was great tantric and vedic scholar. He was also said to had in-depth knowledge of several other subjects like *Smārta*, *Muhūrta*, *Jyotiṣa* and *Vāstuśāstra*. There are numerous works attributed to him that deal with wide range of topics from vedic rituals to several stray verses that lay down the details on the making of different tantric *maṇḍala*-s. The works are *Tilaparvatadāna* and its commentary, *Sarvānukramaṇi*, *Trisandha*, *Sa-*

*nyāsakriyā, Dvādaśyārādhana, Anadhyāyaniyama, Aśvatthopanayana-vidhi, Mrdaṅgopanayanavidhi, Śrīkr̥ṣṇacintāmaṇi and Karmavipākā.*²⁹

4. Kallūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri (1917- 1994): What we know about the personal life of Kallūr Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri is comparatively very little. He has learned *tantra* from Ollūr Kallūr Mana Kumārasvāmi Nampūtirippāḍu and Veda from Thirunāvāya Maṭham. He is another person to be conferred on the title '*Tantraśāstraḥaspati*' by TVP in 1989. Out of several disciples he had Pūkkotṭūr Kuṇjuṇṇi Nampūtiri is considered to be the foremost one.

5. Vezapparaṁbu Parameśvaran Nampūtiri (1932-2002): He was a well known figure among the *tantrin*-s of Kerala for his in-depth knowledge of *tantra* and *vāstuśāstra* (architecture). He had his education on Kerala *tantra* under the direction of Marṛappaḷli Vāsudevan Nampūtiri and Sanskrit under the guidance of the well-known Sanskrit scholar Rama Pisharoti, Thripunithura. And learned basics of architecture from his father Brahmaddattan Nampūtiri. He was held to be one of the authorities on Kerala *tantra* and architecture as well. There are three Sanskrit works authored by him. They are *Āśvalāyanacandrikā, Sudāmacaritam*, and *Kanyāpitṛīyaṁ*.³⁰

To conclude, the Kerala *tantra* has to be located within the vedic tradition of Kerala. So, broadly, Kerala tantrism can be called *vaidika-tantrika* since it is deeply influenced by vedic ideologies and religious observances. This chapter has been focusing on the formal mode of transmission of tantric ritualistic tradition. An attempt is made here to situate the tantric tradition within the cultural history of Kerala and vedic cult. Similarly, the tantric literature has to be read and analyzed from within contexts of pan-Indian tantric literary history and literary history of Kerala as well.

Notes

- ¹ *An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music and Art*, Volume I, edited by Thomas A. Green, p.800.
- ² Some other *tantra*-s other than *Trika*, *Krama* and *Kaula* also warn against receiving *mantra* or initiation directly from one's own father. For example, it is laid down in *Tārātantra* that *mantra* should not be received from father, mother's father and so on.
piturmantram na grhṇīyāt tathā mātāmahādapi /
sodarasya kaniṣṭhasya vairipakṣāśritasya ca //
pramādādvā tathājñānād pitṛdīkṣām samācaret /
prāyaścittam tataḥ kuryāt punardīkṣām samācaret //
piturdīkṣā yaterdīkṣā dīkṣā ca vanavāsinaḥ /
anāśramāṇām yā dīkṣā sādīkṣā duḥkhadāyini // (*Dīkṣāprakāśaḥ*, p.6.)
 Similar views are held by *Yoginītantra* also.
śaktidīkṣāmadhikṛtya pitṛdīkṣā niṣedhāt / mahātīrthe uparāge sati sarvatra
na doṣaḥ /
 and;
nirvīryantu piturmantram tathā mātāmahasya ca /
svapnalabdham striyā dattam samskāreṇāva śuddhyati //
- ³ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, pp-262-63.
- ⁴ see *Brahman Settlements in Kerala*, Appendix-I, pp.96-101. for a complete details of thirty-two settlements. Based on the chief deity who presides over the major temple of each settlement, they are categorized into Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava. Among them Payyannūr, Perimcellūr, Śukapuram, Karikāṭu, Īśānamaṅgalam, Trichur, Peruvanam, Cemmanṭa, Aviṭṭattūr, Paravūr, Airāṇikkaḷam, Kulavūr, Aṭūr, Ceṅgamanāṭu, Tirumuppattu, Uḷiyannūr, Eṇṇumānūr, Kumāranallūr, Kāṭamaruku, Kiṭaṅgūr, Cengannūr, Kaviyūr were predominantly Śaiva settlements. Whereas, Ālattūr, Kārattūr, Panniyūr, Irinjālakkuda, Mūlikkaḷam, Āranmuḷa, Tiruvalla, Veṇmaṇi and Nirmaṇkara were predominantly Vaiṣṇa settlements.
- ⁵ *The Role of Temples in Kerala Society*, p.183.

- ⁶ M.G.S. Narayanan, *op. cit.*, p.214.
- ⁷ Veluthat Kesavan, *Organization and Administration of the Brahman Settlements in Kerala in the Later Cera Period-A.D. 800-1100*, p.185.
- ⁸ see pp. 235-37 in *The Early Medieval in South India*, for the influence and role played by this counsel.
- ⁹ T.R. Venugopalan, *Sambattum Adhikāravum Tṛṣṣūril Ninnuḷḷa Kāzca*, p. 105.
- ¹⁰ M.G.S observes that it is after Śaiva *bhakti* cult established its roots in the region Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* cult became popular. Interestingly enough, the earliest literary reference to a Kerala temple is found in the songs of Sundara Mūrti Nāyanār. In another genre of *bhakti* songs composed by Āḷvār-s references were made to thirteen temples of Malaināṭu which are collectively known as "pāṭalperṛa" temples or "*divyadeśam*-s". Similarly, other *bhakti* poets like Namāḷvār, Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār and Kulaśekhara Āḷvār also refer to some of south Indian Vaiṣṇava temples in their works. These three Āḷvār-s were believed to have lived between eighth-ninth centuries A.D. Hence, M.G.S concludes that all the thirteen Vaiṣṇava temples of Malaināṭu were famous and prosperous long before the close of Cera Kingdom. See *Perumāḷs of Kerala*, p. 346 for more details.
- ¹¹ R. Champakalakshmi, *Religion and Social Change in Tamil Nadu (c. AD 600-1300)*, p.167.
- ¹² *The Role of Temples in Kerala Society (A.D. 1100-1500)*, p.181.
- ¹³ He further observes that Tiruvaḍūr inscription (1020 A.D.), Kiḷimānūr records (1169 A.D.) and Kollūr Maṭṭhaṃ plates (later half of the 10th century A.D.) point to the evidences of the fact that brahmins from different settlements of established tradition are brought and settled around newly consecrated temples. *ibid.*, p.185-86; see also *Brahman Settlements in Kerala*, pp.76-80.
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 9.
- ¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.89.
- ¹⁶ *The Role of Temples in Kerala Society (A.D. 1100-1500)*, p.185.
- ¹⁷ This news has been reported by all major dailies of that time. For instance see the web page of Hindu <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/29/stories/> for the extensive coverage.
- ¹⁸ *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, p. 25.

- 19 *Brahman Settlements in Kerala*, p.105.
- 20 *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, pp.26-7.
- 21 see 1st Volume I, pp. 40-52.
- 22 See Volume I, pp.1-82.
- 23 According to Vaṭakkumkūr, out of these eighteen *maṭha*-s six were dedicated to education of *Bhāṭṭamīmāṃsā*, six for *Prābhākaramīmāṃsā*, three for *Vedānta* and three for *Vyākaraṇa*. *KSSC*, p. 20.
- 24 *KSC*, Vol. I, pp. 47-8.
- 25 For example, suppose in one of the familial traditions the secret cult of the Goddess *bāla* constitutes the central deity of worship. And let familial deity of worship of disciple may be Viṣṇu or Śiva or anyone else. At the time of *mantropadeśa* first the *mantra* and cult of *bālā* is imparted and then of the familial deity of the disciple.
- 26 *KSC*, Vol.I, pp.46-7; *KSSC*, Vol.I, pp.16-7.
- 27 This information is provided by Aṇḍalāḍi Divākaran Nampūtiri in an interview.
- 28 *Putumana: Vyaktiyum Kṛtikaḷum*, Compiled by Putumana Sreedharan Nampūtiri, pp.29-261.
- 29 *Prāsādam*, Trimonthly, 1st Edition, pp.7-9.
- 30 This information is provided by Aṇḍalāḍi Parameswaran Nampoothiri.



Chapter Nine

**FORMAL TRANSMISSION: BRAHMANICAL AND NON-
BRAHMANICAL INSTITUTIONS**

In the previous chapter the core of the discussion has been on informal tantric education methods and families which served as an institution for educating new generation *ācārya*-s. The focus of present chapter is on institutionalized, formal methods of priestly education. There are brahmin and non-brahmin priests in Kerala and there are also brahmanical and non-brahmanical institutions. This chapter is devoted to look at how brahmanical and non-brahmanical institutions mould new generation of *ācārya*-s. It also looks into how education takes place in an institutional setting.

As it is known, the *gurukula* system was prevalent in Kerala before the western educational policies were lawfully enforced. For good or bad, it has deeply influenced our outlook on education policies in general and gradually we have adopted the western system and accommodated it into our traditional pedagogical framework. With this shift of methods, traditional subjects have been started to be viewed as outdated and irrelevant to present age of technical advancement. As new subjects were introduced at college and University levels and given opportunities to explore into the world around, like everyone else, Brahmin youth also lost interest in the traditional subjects and methods. No one wants to make priesthood his profession by adhering to the traditional way of living. On

the other side, some of them could not escape from strong clutches of familial bondages and commitments and left with no choice but to confine to traditional professions. This situation led to degeneration of traditions, particularly, ritualistic traditions (*tantra*), because it went into the hands of unqualified individuals who had no respect for traditional wisdom and customs.

The changes that overtook traditional outlook of Indians in general affected the morale of the priestly community also. The traditionalists who held salvation as the ultimate goal fell finally prey to the business-minded professionalism. Traditional wisdom and purity were thrown into the air and concerned only about those outward aspects which impress the public. This cultural degeneration led to think the reformists to find out a permanent practical solution that will bring back, at least partially, the traditions to their past glory. As a result of this reformist thinking, institutions were opened up to impart wisdom in traditional subjects; thereby providing an institutional base and an academic status for neglected subjects.

S.J Muller, who has conducted an extensive study on priestly education in Tamilnadu,¹ has pointed out that the reformers were first preoccupied with corruption and temple mismanagement. This situation

led to the formation of several executive bodies and introduction of new laws to better the administration of temples. It was Dharma Rakshana Sabha, headed by Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, raised their voice first against corruption and mismanagement and their efforts bore fruit as the government passed Hindu Religious Endowments (HRE) act in 1926. Again in 1952 this HRE board has been replaced by Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR& CE). In the history of priestly education, the second quarter of twentieth century witnessed dramatic changes in the system and methods of education, particularly in South India. As noted by Muller this period in the history is marked by turn of reformists' attention from temple corruption and mismanagement to priests and ritual mis-performance. The first move towards achieving this goal was to print and publish several *Āgama*-s or *Paddhati* texts and circulate it among practicing priests. This "print revolution" brought in sea change in the understanding of pan-Indian *Śaivasiddhānta* in general and South Indian *Śaivasiddhānta* in particular. Here the pivotal role played by the French Institute Pondicherry deserves special mention as it has been taking special care to critically edit and publish several *Āgama*-s under the supervision of renowned scholar N.R. Bhatt. By the late twentieth century new *Āgamic* schools (*veda śivāgama pāṭhasāla*-s)were started emerging in Tamilnadu and three of them stood test of time and produced numerous

Āgamic scholars. They are 1. Allur- a village in Tiruchchirappalli, 2. Pillaiyarpatti- a village in Chettinad 3. and Tirupparankundram.²

The Allur *pāṭhaśālā* was founded by A. Viśvanātha Śivācāryar in 1963. It is noted for strict rules of conducts and remarkable standard students always displayed in the recitation of *mantra*-s and ritual performance. The admission is given to those who have undergone *upanayana* and it takes five years to complete the course. The "*Śivāgamaśiromaṇi*" is the title conferred on those who pass the final examination.

The Pillaiyarpatti is founded in 1978 by K. Pitchai Gurukkal. In the beginning there were only five students but now it turned out to be the biggest Āgamic School in Tamilnadu.³ There is no age limit for admission and it takes four years to complete the course. The "*Śivāgamaratna*" is the degree conferred to those who successfully complete the course.

The Tirupparankundram School is established by Rāja Bhaṭṭar, a graduate of Allur, in 1992. Here also the students of any age are given admission and accommodation. The classes are given in the near-by temple complex. Here the curriculum is modeled on Allur system. The title given to students who pass the final year exam is "*Śivāgamabhāskara*".⁴

But the complete scenario has changed since the appearance of Fuller's monumental studies of system of Āgamic education. It is learned that Allur School has been closed in 2004, but the two other schools are still functioning. And at present there are more than half of a dozen Āgamic schools at different parts of South India. Among them some are situated in the state of Tamilnadu while others are in Karnataka (Banglore). The places where these Āgamic or Vedāgama schools situated in Tamilnadu are Mayiladuthurai (Vedaśivāgamapāṭhaśālā, Nagapattinam District), Kubhakonam, Kanchipuram, Shanmugapuram (Vedaśaivāgama Pāṭhaśālā, Puducherry District) and Kulithali (Karur District). The leading Āgamic institutions which are situated in Karanataka are Veda Agama Samskrutha Maha Pathasala,⁵ Banglore and Rajarajeswari Vedaśivāgama Pāṭhaśālā, Udayapuram, Banglore.

There are some common features shared by some of theses schools alike. There would be a temple adjacent to these institutions and practical lessons are done there. Second, a text is taught in detail and the textual knowledge is considered to be very important. Often one of twenty-eight *Āgama*-s or ritual manuals is to be learned by heart by students. Notwithstanding the classes on Āgamic texts, training is also given on

Veda-s, scripts like Grantha and Devanagari, elementary Sanskrit and Tamil.

Similarly, there are several Vaiṣṇava *Pāṭhaśāla*-s in South India, particularly two institutions at Karnataka and one school at Andhra Pradesh. The institutions in Karnataka are situated at Bangalore and Mysore, where courses on *Pāñcarātra*, *Vaikhānasa* and *Śaivāgama* are offered. Notably, in addition to classes on these subjects the Mysore *pāṭhaśāla* also offers courses on *Vīraśaivāgama*-s and *Jaināgama*-s. The institution in Andhra Pradesh is situated in Elluru, West Godavari District and connected with Venkateswara temple (Venkateswara *Pāṭhaśālā*), Tirumalai. This institution is exclusively for *Vaikhānasa*-s.⁶

The Emergence of Tantric Institutions in Kerala

As has shown how the priestly class of Tamilnadu responded to shift in interests of new generation priests, their counterparts in Kerala also responded to changes in the similar manner. These changes were characterized by degeneration of values and disinterest in traditional professions. The revivalists who sensed this alarming shift in focus started to think about the ways to revive and resurrect the tradition to its glory. The only way before them was to institutionalize the system of tantric education.

This could not be achieved by an individual alone but was possible only with joint effort of traditionalists, like-minded scholars and social activists. However, the dream came true and thus emerged the first and the foremost institution in Kerala to impart priestly education to new generation of *tantrin*-s. It was a time when new generation of hereditary *tantrin*-s were showing reluctance to follow the traditional tantric rights they inherited. The lack of interest of new generation of *tantrin*-s in the priestly profession and scarcity of knowledgeable practicing priests led Late Madhavji and some other traditional *tantrin*-s of Kerala to think of opening an institution to mould new generation in a traditional way. It is at this juncture that the TVP takes birth.

I. Brahmanical Institution: Emergence of Thantra Vidya Peedhom

In fact, the history of TVP begins with a meeting held at Guruvayoor on 21& 22 August 1969 in which well-known *tantrin*-s and Social activists of Kerala like Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri (*tantrin* of Guruvayoor Temple), Aṇḍalāḍi Valiya Divākaran Nampūtiri, Putumana Dāmodaran Nampūtiri, Pullāmvāzi Devanārāyaṇan Nampūtiri, Cennas Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri (Chalakkudy), Maṅkaṭa Kovilakattu Kāśi Viśvanātha Śarma Raja, Madhavji and P.S. Kāśi Viśvanāthan unanimously took a decision to start an institution for teaching the new

generation of *tantrin*-s. It took three more years to turn it into a reality as an institution called TVP started to function in 1972. Initially, it functioned at Brahmasvam Maṭham Veda Pāṭhaśālā at Tirunāvāya and although first batch constituted five students just three of them namely, Aṇḍalāḍi Divākaran Nampūtiripāḍu, Poṭṭakkuzi Nārāyaṇan Nampūtiri and Azakam Śāstrīśarman Nampūtiri completed the six years' course. It was patronized by Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peedham and who provided capital amount to function in the early stages. In the very next year (1973) it was shifted to Chovvannur Sabhā Maṭham where it functioned for next twelve years. It again got shifted to Kizhakke Veliyathu Nadu, Aluva in April 1985. It is here the TVP is functioning for last four decades.

During the early stages, Madhavji's effort to bring students from traditional tantric families of Kerala was not well appreciated by many traditionalists as they were reluctant to send their children to the institution. But his fame as a social reformist, knowledge of the subject and charismatic presence changed the minds of some of traditional *tantrin*-s and finally they let their children to get educated at the TVP. The financial support provided by the Kanchi Madhom was not at all enough to function smoothly even with five students and a teacher. The traditional

tantrin-s of Kerala, who were expected to support morally and financially such a move to institutionalize the traditional system of education, turned their back to this initiative and opposed vehemently. In short, during the initial stages there had been only a few supporters for bringing forward TVP as an institution which stood to revive a tradition which was on the verge of extinction. It is against this backdrop its emergence and growth as a foremost institution in Kerala has to be assessed.

As it is mentioned, first it started to function in Tirunāvāya Brahmasvam Maṭham Veda Pāṭhaśālā. Kalppuza Divākaran Nampūtiri was the first principal and the sole teacher who taught not only tantric rituals but also trained students in Vedic chanting. The theoretical classes were given by Madhavji, who taught the governing philosophy of temple rituals in particular. Most of the students admitted to the six year course were in the first batch were from well-known hereditary families of *tantrin*-s. As it is stated by Aṇḍalāḍi Divākaran Nampūtiri, the first batch student, there was not a particular curriculum initially. The classes were given in such a way that if a student wanted to perform a particular ritual in a temple where his family had the hereditary right, the emphasis was laid on that particular ritual. The curriculum was formulated only later when the number of students who started to come from various tantric and

non-tantric families across Kerala increased. The syllabus has been revised several times and additional subjects are included every time. Initially, there were classes only on tantric rituals, some necessary portions of *R̥gveda* and *Yajurveda* and elementary Sanskrit. Later on students are given permission to join for degree courses that were offered in a distance mode by some Universities. As part of this initiative new teachers were appointed for taking classes in English and Sanskrit. Some short term classes are being given on Architecture and Astrology at times.

Admission Criteria

Earlier, there was no age bar and students who have completed the course were of different age groups. But for last one decade admission has been given only to the students those who have passed the tenth standard (SSLC). The age limit is confined to sixteen and any brahmin boy who has undergone the *upanayana* can apply for the course. The admission is not confined to the members of tantric families. Every year eight to ten students are selected. Though, in theory, the admission is open to anyone who meets the prescribed qualification irrespective of his caste, practically it is not implemented to date.

The Syllabus

The classes on ritual do not directly start with ritual procedures. The students are initiated into the world of ritualistic cult of *tantra* through *mantropadeśa*. The *upadeśa* of *mantra*-s of some deities⁷ is given in general and that of familial deities is given individually in particular. The students have to include cult of these deities into the scheme of their daily religious observances. Interestingly, no ritual forms part of *mantropadeśa*. It is to be noted that in an institution where the *TS* is followed to a great extent in curriculum as well as in practice, the procedure of *mantropadeśa* is not done in accordance with the textual prescriptions. First the classes are given on daily observances like *sandhyāvandana* and some of the vedic *mantra*-s like *puṇyāha* and *saptaśuddhi*. The elementary Sanskrit is also taught along with the classes on rituals. Throughout the course, the stress is laid on rote learning of the *mantra*-s, ritual passages and ritual procedures. Students do not need to use their intellectual faculty in mastering the necessary skills. And no problem is seen in performing rituals without understanding the meaning of the actions and their philosophical context.

The learning of ritual procedures proceeds from mastering the *laghupūjā* to complex rituals of *navīkaraṇa*. As explained in the context

of informal methods of education, four stages in the curriculum can be discerned namely, *laghupūjā*, *saparivarpūjā*, rituals of *utsava* and rituals of *navīkaraṇa*. Along with mastering these ritual procedures one has to memorize the necessary and related portions of the texts like *TS* and *ŚS* and also all the essential vedic *mantra*-s that are used in respective rituals. Except the verses of the first two *paṭala*-s, ten *paṭala*-s from three to twelve should be memorized from first to last. The *mantra*-s *Ṛgveda* are taught in the typical Kerala style of recitation. Every year oral and written exams are conducted and one who passes final year examination is given the title "*Tantraratna*". A student becomes a full-fledged *tantrin* only when he is exposed to actual ritual performance and through his practical experiences.

Administration: Committee and the Capital Fund

The administration committee consists mainly of members of traditional *tantrin*-s, old students and other prominent people of public. The Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Vedavidya Pratishthan (MSRVVP)⁸ provides substantial amount every year for teaching and promoting Kerala style of recitation and teaching *Ṛgveda* in particular. They conduct vedic examination every year and those who pass the final year examination is given the degree "*Vedabhūṣaṇ*". So one who pass out from the institution

gets two degrees in total namely "*Tantraratna*" and "*Vedabhūṣaṇ*". Despite the funds provided by the MSRVVP, students has to remit some amount as fee called "*gurudakṣiṇā*" every year and also a share of *dakṣiṇā* that they receive for doing rituals. The institution also gets financial supports from certain well-wishers and supporters.

The TVP is founded on certain principles. The main objective is to provide priestly education to young generation *tantrin*-s of Kerala along with modern education. The founders had a far reaching vision as the students who pass out from the institution that would have a general idea of tantric traditions in general and Kerala *tantra* in particular. More importantly, they will be socially committed than their forefathers. Above all they should be *sādhaka*-s in real sense because it is believed that only such people can be bring changes in the society and free it from superstitions and exploitations. It is high time to examine how far they have achieved this, are away from the ideals set by founders and whether they ever succeeded in producing an ideal *tantrin* in its long run extending for more than three decades.

In several ways the method of education followed by the TVP resembles informal system of education. But slight changes are made in syllabus and time tables. It is imperative when an informal system of

education is adapted to needs of institutionalized, syllabus-oriented methods of education. In the informal system, learning may take place at any time and the students will be always uncertain about timings and syllabus. But in formal education system everything is preplanned and goes as per the set pattern. Students would know the class timings and the syllabi beforehand and there is nothing to be uncertain about. New topics are taught in an informal system only when teachers are convinced about students' depth of understanding. Hence, no need to conduct exams every year to understand how far students understood the topics in question. And one of the major advantages of informal system learning is that students get enough exposure to ritual ceremonies from the very beginning of education. Whereas, the formal education is more time-bound and priority is given to covering the topics, preparing students for passing the exams. Amid the tight schedule, the students will not get enough exposure to actual ritual events.

The TVP is the only institution of its kind. Now, there are several institutions and organizations that offer short term courses of tantric rituals. Mostly these institutions courses offer courses every year on vacation days.

II. Non-Brahmanical Institutions

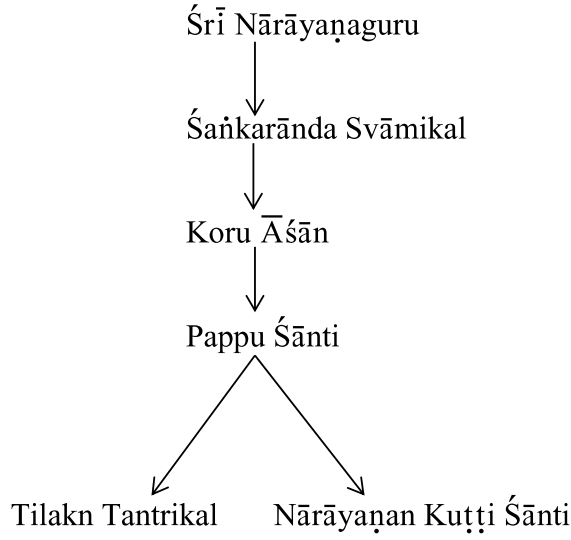
Like TVP which is primarily an institution for brahmins, there are several institutions in Kerala exclusively for non- brahmins. But these institutions are very much different from the TVP in terms of basic ideologies, syllabus and overall functioning. Though there are half a dozen of such institutions in and around Kerala, details of two prominent institutions are given here in detail. The reason is that some of them are recent ones and they follow the model of existing ones. And also teachers who take classes in these institutions are the same individuals. In some of these institutions priorities are given to teaching the daily domestic and temple worships and vedic *mantra*-s as well. After learning these basics only a few students opt for higher studies, for many of them prefer to be priests in temples. In other words, these institutions are merely concerned with moulding the temple priests but not *ācārya*-s who can perform installation and renovation rituals. The major difference between TVP and these institutions are the former produce full-fledged *ācārya*-s whereas, non-brahmanical institutions produce more temple priests. Generally, non-brahmin priests are known as *Śānti*-s in several parts of Kerala.

1. Koru Āśān Smāraka Vaidika Saṅgham

The Koru Āśān Smāraka Vaidika Saṅgham is officially declared as an institution in 1987. Until then it has been serving as a center for educating Īzava community on the temple rituals and *Veda*-s in a *gurukula* system. The present head of the institution Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti, the younger brother of late Tilakan Tantrikal and *tantrin* of the Maṇattala Viśvanātha temple, Ala Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple and many others, traces the lineage back to Śrī Nārāyaṇaguru (1854-1928), the well-known spiritual leader and social reformer of Kerala. The origin of such a non-brahmanical tradition of *tantra* can be traced to the revolutionary *Aruvikkara pratiṣṭhā*, where Guru has installed *Śivaliṅga* in 1888. It sparked controversies and invited ire of orthodox brahmins as it has been a privilege of brahmins. Their protests led Guru and his followers to think about forming an independent line of tradition of Īzava temple priests and *tantrin*-s. For this purpose Śaṅkarānanda Svāmikal, popularly known as Śaṅkaran Paradeśi Svāmikal, was chosen and sent to Kāśī for learning tantric worship and other temple-oriented customs and ritual practices. After his return, he trained Koru Āśān (1890-1988), from him it went to Pappu Śānti (1915-1993). Though this mainly an oral tradition, it is claimed that the source of their rituals can be traced to the

Brahmakarmasamuccaya. This is published work but out of print at present. The line of tradition starting from Guru up to Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti is said to be as following.

The *Guruparamparā* of Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti



(Figure: IX. 1)

Earlier there were two centers of priestly education one is Koru Āśān's residence where he trained students in a traditional manner. The other one is at Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple, Ala, near Kodungalloor, where Pappu Śānti gave classes on temple worships and daily vedic observances. The system of worship taught by these preceptors is quite different from Brahmanical tradition. As revealed by Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti the rituals are relatively simple and less time consuming. And many of the rituals

found in *TS* are absent in the tradition he represents. But it is to be noted that such a non-brahmanical tradition is almost on the verge of extinction as only few people, e.g; Puruṣottaman *tantrin*, are said to be practicing it as such. Some traditionalists like him resisted the changes that characterized later phase of tradition.

The later phase is marked by adapting to brahmanical tradition, to be more exact, the system of ritual tradition taught in TVP. This major historical shift in focus is reinforced by Madhavji who not only led from front but urged spiritual leaders of Īzava community to adapt to brahmanical system of worship also. As a part of this move, a workshop (*paṭhanaśibira*) has been held at Advaita Ashrama at Aluva In 1984, where non-brahmins were given training in temple rituals and allied subjects by brahmin *tantrin*-s like Azakattu Śāstrīśarman Nampūtiri, former student of TVP, under the directions of Madhavji. This workshop provided first exposure to brahmanical system of rituals and there by challenged the long held conventional notion that brahmins are alone privileged to perform temple rituals. This has been hailed by non-brahmin community as a turning point in the history, which challenged brahmanical hegemony in the religious matters. It was Madhavji who urged Azakattau Śāstrīśarman Nampūtiri to teach other castes, particularly

the Īzava-s, the rituals and other daily religious observances. In a nutshell, it can be said that this has been a shift from the *Brahmakarmasamuccaya* to *TS*. Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti admits that now he is totally adapted to brahmanical system and follows the *TS* thoroughly in practice.

Admission Criteria

Anyone from Īzava community who is interested in learning the rituals is given admission irrespective of his age in Koru Āśān Smāraka Vaidika Saṅgham. Here the classes are not held in a daily basis but often in weekends. Before the classes begin, the *mantropadeśa* of the *gāyatrī*, *pañcākṣara* are given. No particular syllabus is followed but rituals are taught in a particular order. The students first learn to perform *naivedya* and then the procedures of the *laghupūjā*. Once they master the *laghupūjā*, the ritual specifications of the *saparivārapūjā* is taught. Up to the *saparivārapūjā*, the training is given to all students alike and this is the minimum required knowledge to be a temple priest. Only a few aspire for higher education which includes the course on rituals of the *utasava* and *navīkaraṇa*. Also included in the course is the study of certain portions of texts like *TS*, *Śāradātilaka* and *ŚS*. No exams are conducted and no degree is awarded.

The institution is run by the income of the teachers that they receive while performing domestic and temple rituals. In the past few years the Guruvayoor Devaswam has been providing financial assistance but at present no institution is providing any fund for the cause.⁹

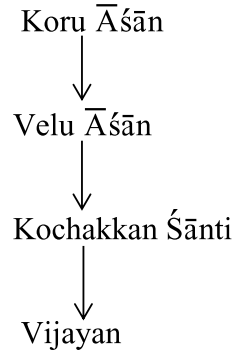
2. Gurupadam

The Gurupadam is another institution where non-brahmin students get training not only in temple worships but domestic rites and vedic chanting also. It is situated in Konathukunnu, Kodungalloor district. Here students learn under the guidance of T.S Vijayan (affectionately called Vijayeṭṭan) who is a disciple of late Shri. Madhavji. Though he has been teaching students in a center at Karumatra, the same institution was officially named and registered as Gurupadam in 1986. At present he is a *tantrin* of many *mahākṣetra*-s like Varrkkara Devi Temple, Karumatra Subrahmaṇya Temple, Pulani Subrahmaṇya Temple, Tesseri Cīkkāmunḍi Temple and so on. He performs all domestic as well as the temple rituals ranging from the *ṣaḍādhārapraṭiṣṭhā* to *navīkaraṇa*. He is not only a *tantrin* but also a sought after public speaker who is very fluent both in Malayalam and Sanskrit.

T.S Vijayan is also belonging to the same line of tradition; the origin of which is traced back to the well-known spiritual leader and

social reformer Śrī Nārāyaṇa Guru. According to him from Koru Āśān it went to his disciple Velu Āśān, where it takes a different turn from the preceptorial lineage of Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti. The lineage is as following;

The *Guruparamparā* of T. S. Vijayan



(Figure: IX. 2)

After learning the traditional methods of worship from Kochakkan Śānti, Vijayan had his higher education on temple rituals under the guidance of Azakattu Śāstrīśarman Nampūtiri. It is in the workshop conducted at Advaita Ashramam, Aluva that he gets his first exposure to Kerala brahmanical system of temple rituals. After learning from Śāstrīśarman Nampūtiri, Vijayan has adapted to Kerala system of ritual but did not give up the cardinal elements of the tradition to which he belonged. What he is teaching his students at present is a system of

mixture of two ritual cults, which he has evolved himself. And it is very similar to the system taught in TVP.

The classes in Gurupadam are not held on daily basis. Rather weekends are preferred and students from different parts of Kerala gather and some even stay there for two days in a week. The classes are held in a typical *gurukula* system. As a preliminary, the *sandhyāvandana*, some vedic *mantra*-s and *laghupūjā* (*ṣaṭpīṭhapūjā*) are taught. The higher level instructions on temple rituals are given only to those who aspire to go further. He does not accept money from his students as *dakṣiṇā* or in any other names. No formal exams are conducted and students do not get any certificate when they leave the institution. Among the several students who got training under Vijayan's guidance, only four or five namely, Dr. O.V Shibu, Gireesh Mekkadu, Gireesh Puthanchira and Gopan Annanatu (Chalakkudy) are said to have had higher education in tantric rituals and are proficient enough to perform all kinds of temple rituals.¹⁰

These are the popular non-brahmanical institutions in Kerala where the people belonging to other castes are given training in domestic and temple rituals. Though they are not brahmins by birth, the rituals they perform are of brahmanical in nature. Therefore in a broad sense it can be said that there exists only brahmanical tradition of *tantra* in Kerala. There

is not much time left for other divergent traditions related to temple cult to disappear for ever if unattended or cared for.

To conclude, education has a key role to play in the inner transformation of an individual. It is not only about imparting textual passages or oral instructions but beyond that. Students also imbibe morals and values along with. With regard to priestly education it is confined to learning a particular text and oral instructions. In that case too, students are not equipped to locate the tradition in a broad historical context. There are many ritual manuals produced before and after the *TS*. But none of them figures in the syllabus of these institutions. A syllabus prepared with these insights will be more rewarding than that has been followed for more than several decades.

The Organization of *tantrin*-s

The organization of traditional *tantrin*-s of Kerala is known as Tantrisaṁājam which is established in 1981. The Kūttālakkaṭṭu Mana (Angamaly) is the main center of the organization. Geographically, it is divided into three branches namely, south (*dakṣiṇamekhalā*), middle (*madhyamekhalā*) and north (*uttaramekhalā*). The districts Idukki, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram and Kanyakumari belong to *dakṣiṇamekhalā* whereas; Malappuram, Palakkad,

Thrissur and Eranakulam constitute *madhyamekhalā*. The *uttaramekhalā* constitutes the districts Kasargod, Kannur, Vayanadu, Kozhikkode and Mahi.

In order for a tantric family to get membership in the organization the family must have been holding the hereditary rights of temples at least for five generations. And the line of tradition must be unbroken down to present generation. Anyone who is eighteen years old or more is eligible for membership.

Of the many objectives, betterment of living environments of *tantrin*-s, opening institutions to educate new generations on tantric rituals, Sanskrit and *Veda*-s, conducting programs to create public awareness on temple customs and significance of tantric worship and publishing less known and unpublished texts are said to be the priorities. It may be remembered that the organization always held conventional views and stood firmly for them. It vehemently opposed the moves that enable non- brahmins to perform temple rituals.¹¹

To summarize, these are the leading brahmanical as well as non-brahmanical tantric institutions in Kerala. They have a pivotal role to play in moulding *ācārya*-s who are well-versed and socially committed. The current syllabus of these institutions has to be revised in such a way that

students should be able to locate the tradition in a broader context and theoretical aspects of rituals also should be equally emphasized. Otherwise *ācārya*-s will remain mere technicians and what they impart to the next generation would be mere techniques.

Notes

- ¹ See for details the book *The Renewal of the Priesthood: Modernity and Traditionalism in a South Indian Temple*.
- ² *ibid.*, p.94.
- ³ *ibid.*, p.97.
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p.98-9.
- ⁵ It was established in 2002 by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (Founder of the Art of Living). The School offers seven years training on Āgamic system of worship. The syllabus also includes training on *Veda*, Sanskrit, Astrology, *Yoga*, Sculpture and Epics. Those who complete the course successfully are conferred on the title "Śivāgamavidyānidhi".
- ⁶ Ute Husken, *Viṣṇu's Children: Prenatal Life-cycle Rituals in South India*, p. 246.
- ⁷ Particularly the *mantra*-s of seven deities mentioned in *TS*.
- ⁸ It is an organization comes under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India. It has many activities related to Vedic studies under its belt. Its major activities are providing financial assistance to Vedic Institutions for preserving oral tradition of Vedic recitation, opening vedic classes for all, conducting All-India and regional vedic seminars, workshops and felicitating vedic scholars etc.
- ⁹ These details are provided by Nārāyaṇan Kuṭṭi Śānti in an interview held with him on 28/ 10/13.
- ¹⁰ These information furnished by T.S Vijayan in an interview conducted on 24/ 10/ 2013.
- ¹¹ For more details see the website [www. thanthrisamajam.com](http://www.thanthrisamajam.com).



Conclusion

This is a general study on the distinguishing characteristics of ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra*. It is necessary to contextualize Kerala *tantra* at the very outset and it can be situated within a larger context of pan-Indian tantric ritual cults. The tantric traditions of divergent nature are generally known by their scriptural divisions. And the scriptural divisions within Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions are relatively very complex and knowledge of these scriptural divisions is essential to understand tantrism in its whole. The *Saiddhāntika* cult of Śaivism and *Pāñcarātra* of Vaiṣṇavism are the similar exoteric cults of temple worship, within which Kerala *tantra* can be located.

The rituals are central to tantric cults in general and their nature and philosophical backgrounds vary considerably from vedic and other ritual cults. It is necessary to have a general idea of the system of tantric rituals in background before undertaking any study related pan- Indian or regionally-bound ritualistic traditions. Traditionally it is held that initiation is the necessary prerequisite to perform rituals and other tantric mode of practices. In simple terms the initiation can be defined from within the context of ritual cults as a right-giving ceremony. Depending on the category of initiation, an initiate is privileged to perform all the

cult-specific rituals given in texts of a tradition. Broadly, the rituals are categorized into *ātmārtha* and *parārtha pūja*-s. The former is done by an initiate for his own purpose; while the latter is done for a common good. The cult of temple worship falls within the purview of the latter i.e., *parārtha*.

A tradition survives through textual and oral streams. In a ritualistic tradition emphasis is always laid on the oral stream. It is particularly true in the case of Kerala tantric traditions too. About the ritual manuals of Kerala, they are invariably associated with one or other of the tantric families and confined to that particular ritual tradition. There are an umpteen textual sources associated with several tantric traditions of Kerala, extending from early medieval period down to present era. These texts would throw considerable light on the historical transformations of ritualistic tantric traditions if rightly situated within the context of cultural history of Kerala. Out of hundreds of ritual manuals produced in Kerala, a dozen of them only are rightly preserved, edited and published. There are yet many unknown or relatively less known ritual manuals of Kerala waiting to see light of the day. These manuals may not be that significant for a practitioner, but indispensable for scholars who try to understand the traditions in their length and breadth. Until many of these manuscripts are

critically edited and published and other historical sources are explored thoroughly, our knowledge of ritualistic tradition of Kerala *tantra* will remain limited.

In formative periods the Kerala *tantra* evolved as an off-shoot of the *Saiddhāntika* and *Pāñcarātra* ritual traditions. Its later developments could be linked with cultural-religious history of Kerala. Mention may be made to the fact that the beliefs and practices of the vedic ritual cult also had strong influence on tantric ritual cult of Kerala. It also contains the elements of *purāṇic* as well as regional beliefs and practices. To put it in a nut shell, structurally the present Kerala ritualistic tradition of *tantra* is a multi-layered and hybrid of several beliefs, ritual customs and practices.

The two ritual procedures namely, initiation (*dīkṣā*) and renovation (*jīrṇoddhāra*) are the most complex of all *naimittika* rituals. The technical knowledge of former is necessary to perform the rituals of *pratiṣṭhā*. It is also equally important to know ritual techniques *jīrṇoddhāra* that has to be done in the wake of unprecedented catastrophic incidents as the wreckage of some part of temple building due to natural or unnatural reasons, accidental or natural breaking of *pīṭha* or *bimba*. The pattern in which the renovation rituals are designed in Kerala traditions is distinct and perhaps, characteristic of Kerala *tantra* alone.

The early ritual manuals produced in Kerala such as the *PM*, *ŚN* and *VS* deal with temple ritual cult of a single deity, i.e., Śiva or Viṣṇu alone. Later on, following the lead of the *PM* and *ŚN*, the *KS* is found to be adding ritual specifications of five more deities. Then the total number amounts to seven. The *TS*, the most influential ritual manual ever produced, also deals with the cult of worship of seven deities. In course of time cult of several more deities are found to have been added to the traditional ritual repertoire of Kerala *tantra*. In short, this paradigm shift from dealing with cult of single deity to accommodation of pantheon of quite a number of deities can be technically termed as a move from "ritual exclusivism" to "ritual eclecticism".

The emergence of the *TS* can be considered to be a milestone in the textual history of the Kerala *tantra*. It has totally revolutionized the ways in which rituals are performed in temples of Kerala and more importantly, the conceptual understanding of deity itself. Attention may be drawn also to the fact that it was with the *TS*, a new concept of the deity, who is subjected to karmic retributions, came to the fore. And rituals that accommodated or modified during the post-*TS* period are aligned to this relatively new concept. The post-*TS* period is also characterized by modification of several rituals and disappearance of some of the important

ritual procedures. But surprisingly, many of these rituals are not found to be textually encoded yet. These unrecorded rituals still remain within the domain of the oral stream.

The word tradition (*paramparā*) itself suggests a flow of something. The flow of wisdom from a master to his disciple is called transmission. The flow is natural whereas the transmission is deliberate or intentional. For something to be transmitted there should be two poles, one at the giving end and the other at the receiving end. In an informal learning the flow takes its the natural course; while in formal learning it is deliberate and intentional.

Earlier, the tantric education took place mainly within and outside the compound of traditional families. The members of the traditional families were alone given the opportunity to learn and practice temple-oriented cult of religious observances like rituals of installation, festival and renovation. But institutions started to emerge by the end of the last century and traditional education setting paved way for institutionalized modern educational setting.

The distinguished characteristic of tantric education is that the oral instructions as well as textual passages have to be memorized. The memorization is considered to be the key to success. Modern trends in

education have also indeed largely influenced the tantric system of education. It is a high time to revise the syllabus of all institutions since tantric education is not merely learning to master techniques of worship. It is more than that. If institutions only care about and stand for preserving peripheral aspects of a tradition, they not only betray a tradition but the whole individuals who strived hard behind its glory.

As a general study scope of the present thesis is limited but it could shed light on dark corners of comparatively less explored aspects. Specialized study on several aspects of Kerala *tantra* is yet a desideratum.



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Appendix



Ṣaḍādhārapratīṣṭhā



Aṅkurāropana



Aṅkura



Kumbheśa-karkarī pūjā



Kumbheśa-karkarī pūjā



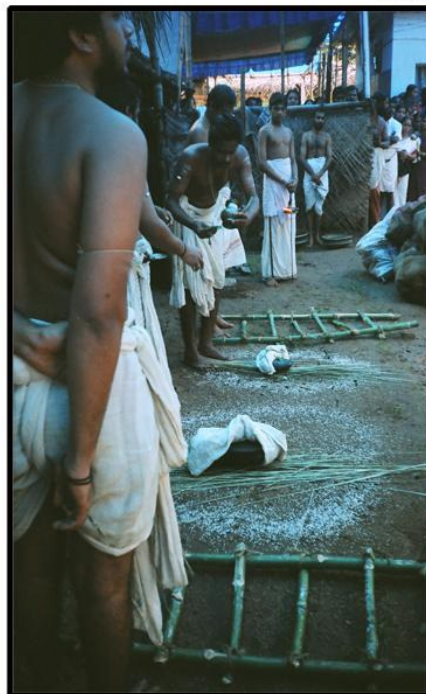
Kumbheśa-karkarī pūjā



Jalādhivāsaṃ



Bimbaśuddhi



Bimbaparityāgaḥ









Tattvahomakunda



Tattvahoma



Brhamakalaśapūjā



Parikalaśapūjā



Parikalaśa



Brahmakalaśa and Parikalaśa



Brahmakalaśa and Parikalaśa



Khaṇḍabrahman



Khaṇḍabrahman



Parikalaśapūraṇa



Parikalaśapūraṇa



Kalaśādhivāsa



Kalaśādhivāsa



Maṇḍapa



Kalaśamaṇḍapa



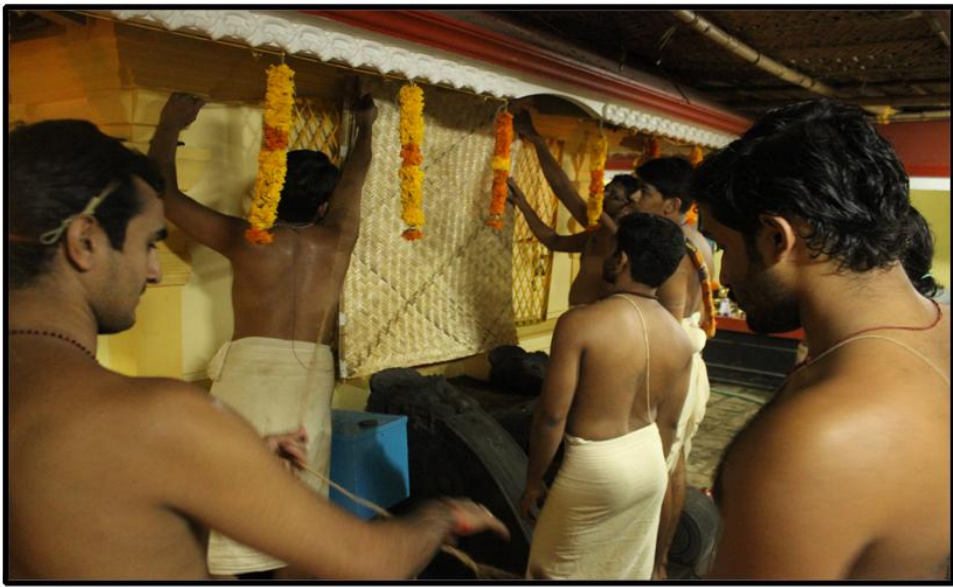
Kalaśaparikramaṇa



dhyānādhivāsa



Brāhmaṇabhojana



Dvārapidhāna



Dvārapidhāna



Stūpikāpratiṣṭhā



Parivārapratiṣṭhā



Parivārapratiṣṭhā



Parivārapratiṣṭhā



Mahābalipīṭhādhivāsa



Aśvathopanayana

